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# THE THREE WHITE RAJAS



*Hugh Cecil*

*Vyner Brooke.*  
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# THE THREE WHITE RAJAS

*By*

HER HIGHNESS THE RANEE OF SARAWAK

*Author of "Sylvia of Sarawak"*

WITH 11 HALF-TONE ILLUSTRATIONS



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**J. I. G.**

**‘I’ll always be somewhere forever your Friend.’**



## FOREWORD

By HIS HIGHNESS THE RAJA OF SARAWAK, G.C.M.G.

I REGARD my wife's invitation to write a foreword to her *Three White Rajas* as so graceful a gesture that I feel it would be ungallant, in this instance, to adhere to my hitherto unbroken rule not to appear in print.

In any case, this foreword has the merit of originality, since it is written without any knowledge of how she proposes to treat the subject. I know that she has devoted much time and trouble to research in connection with this work, and I shall be as interested in seeing what conclusion she comes to concerning the characters of my Predecessors and myself, and their influence on the trend of Sarawak history, as I hope others will be.

I might be tempted to avail myself of this opportunity to give a dissertation on what I consider the proper method of "Governing Natives" had I any settled convictions on the subject, but if forty years of administration have taught me anything, it is the danger of assuming that any hard-and-fast rules can be laid down and followed in this connection.

A very great, humane and astute Frenchman, Monsieur Paul Cambon, summed up his convictions in the following words:

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“In Politics, as in life, it is essential that one should be able to look at things from the point of view of the other party.”

The views of the other party alter according to conditions and circumstances, and these alterations must be followed with sympathy and understanding, if harmony is to be achieved. Similarly with the Native viewpoint. Trouble is bound to occur if the ruling power is lacking in adaptability, because it must be remembered that the demands of successive Asiatic generations alter mainly on account of changes brought about by the increasing Europeanization of their environment.

Sarawak has been fortunate, up to the present time, in being a small country very much off the beaten track. She bears about the same relationship to the Imperial group as a Dartmoor village does to England. So hitherto the Malays, Europeans, Chinese, and indigenous and other races composing her microcosm have lived a kind of family life which is probably unparalleled elsewhere.

Squabbles there have been, as must occur in all families, but these have never developed into serious differences, owing to mutual sympathy and understanding arising from intimate relations and common aims. I trust that this state of affairs may continue long after my time.

It may not be considered out of place if I say here that I think my wife's dedication of her last book to me with the phrase that I have never let her down, and that I have made her laugh as has no other man, one of the greatest compliments ever

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paid to any husband. I think, moreover, that it conveys a better impression of her own nature than any eulogies of her husband could do. Mutual understanding, like Charity, should begin at Home.

C. V. BROOKE,  
RAJA.





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I WISH to acknowledge the courtesy of Messrs Hutchinson & Co. Ltd. in enabling me to quote several passages from my autobiography, *Sylvia of Sarawak*, published by them in 1936.

My thanks are also due to His Highness the Tuan Muda of Sarawak, Mr J. A. Smith, Mr W. Clark, Mr Howell and Mr Jack Golden, without whose help this book would never have been completed.

**JAMES BROOKE**



## JAMES BROOKE

JAMES BROOKE was born on the 29th of April, 1803, in the European suburb of Benares called Secrore.

There was no outward and visible sign; no meteoric decoration of the heavens or tremblings of the earth to denote that one of the greatest pioneers in history had started upon his first adventure into the world. For twelve years he lived in India, gaining impressions of the natives and their ways, and all the while the tropical rains and the tropical sun were penetrating into his very system, and imbuing him forever with the lure of the East.

James Brooke was born with the spirit of adventure, and endowed with the gaiety of youth. There was no fear in his entire disposition. His parents were fond and perhaps foolish—it is so often the way with children born out East. They give a wrench to the heart because of their paleness and their frailty, so that a kind of apologetic pampering is showered upon them, as if their parents were endeavouring to repay them for not having delivered them upon the soil where they belonged.

James Brooke needed no such commiseration; he was a healthy and gallant little boy, with the bluest eyes in the world. He was the second son, and the fifth child, of the Thomas Brooke, and he

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was their favourite. Perhaps he was the only one out of all their children who was not afraid of his parents, and he would tease his mother for always addressing his father as "Brooke."

When James Brooke was twelve years old his parents, thinking perhaps that his surroundings were not entirely good for him, sent him to England to his grandmother's home at Reigate. Now, to be wafted from Secrore into Reigate would be rather like being taken straight from the alluring pages of Defoe to the conventional dictation of some historic work. For the first time in his life this boy felt the chains of propriety about his neck. Old Mrs Brooke, stuffy and smelling of decayed leaves, thought it was her duty to send this unruly grandson of hers to Norwich Grammar School, and it was there, upon the river Wensum, that James Brooke learned to manipulate and manage his first sailing-boat.

For two whole years he submitted his adventurous spirit to the bondage of a school routine, and then one night he made up his mind to run away. He waited until all was quiet, and squeezing himself out of his bedroom window, he climbed down the creepers of the house . . . to freedom. He was found, starving and exhausted and fast asleep, outside his grandmother's door at Reigate.

It was about this time that his parents returned from India and settled at Combe Grove, near Bath. A tutor was had in to educate young James, and to guide his inky fingers over the maps and histories of the world, but of what use was this to James



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Brooke, who was full to the brim with the magic of adventure?

“Do you not want to learn how countries have been made?” the poor tutor would cry helplessly, and James Brooke, with his blue eyes on the blue sky outside, would answer softly, “No . . . I would much rather make a country of my own.”

The want of regular training was of infinite disadvantage to this boy, and he started life without the slightest knowledge of control. He was headstrong and impulsive, and with his handsome countenance and splendid physique it was not surprising that he was petted and spoilt by all who came in contact with him. He was so sure of whatever he set out to do, so confident of himself. The confidence of ignorance, for is it not a true saying, that the more we know, the less we feel we know? James Brooke would look so far ahead that he would entirely forget that the path to success is only trodden upon the experience of others.

At the age of sixteen he threw his books on one side, obtained an ensign's commission in the 6th Madras Infantry, and very soon after that set sail again for India. Even then, his destiny drove him out East, and like a Dick Whittington of the Orient, he turned again and again to the call of the native gongs.

It did not take him long to become a sub-assistant Commissary-General, an appointment that he, with his lack of education, was totally unfitted to uphold. So he immediately sat himself down to read, and very soon became better read and more versatile-minded than most men of his time.

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When the first Burmese war broke out, in 1824, James Brooke found what he had been seeking for so long. Fighting . . . blood . . . the thunder of a cavalry charge. Those were the things of life worth waiting for. "This," he cried exultingly, waving his sword, "this is what I was born for!" . . . but ten seconds later he fell to the ground with a bullet through his lung.

He was left for dead on the field of battle, and had not a certain Colonel Richards seen him fall and demanded to be taken to his body, James Brooke would never have been heard of again. Colonel Richards discovered that he was still alive, so he was carried carefully into camp, where he lay for many months hovering upon the borders of existence. At last, one day when he had sufficiently recovered to be moved, they lifted him into a canoe, and paddled him quietly away from all he held most dear. Never again, as he thought then, to see the river swelling under a storm, with the mud rushing to the surface of it like the blood into the angry cheeks of a savage. Never again to see the sunsets burning up the sky, or to hear the insects calling to one another as the boat brushed by them, and the rains slashing upon the jungle trees. "Even if I do not return," he whispered, "the East will be with me for all time."

When he arrived in Calcutta he was taken before the Medical Board, who informed him that a change of climate was imperative. He was granted a lengthy furlough, and a pension of £70 a year, on account of the great services he had rendered to his

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country. And so he returned to his relations in Bath, an invalid, without much chance of recovery.

Eventually he was strong enough to rejoin the Indian Army, but the East India Company's ship taking him out was wrecked off the Isle of Wight and he was forced to return. He had only twelve days left of his leave in which to reach Bengal, and he knew that this was impossible. Fate had closed the door of his career as a soldier, and so, with a shrug of his broad shoulders, he sent in his resignation and said to himself, "Now, what do I do next?" Very soon after his resignation he set forth to China, and it was during this first voyage to the China seas that he saw the islands of the Asiatic Archipelago—*islands of unlimited possibilities and unequalled beauty, lying idle and unknown. Just an open field for adventure and research. Regions mysterious and dark, the very atmosphere that James Brooke needed and had been searching for so long.*

As he stood, a mere passenger, upon the deck—just one amongst a quantity of ordinary prosaic travellers—the strong breeze blowing in his dark hair and the salt spray stinging the blueness of his eyes, a prayer came stumbling to his lips. "God grant," he said, "that one day I may purchase a ship, load her with a marvellous cargo, and set sail for China on my own account."

Trading, that was what he believed in in those days. But to trade it was necessary to have capital. He longed to turn to these passengers and cry out for money, to tell them that he would repay them

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twice over what they had given him, if only they would give. He knew no one but his father who possessed such riches, but the appeal to his father had invariably met with the same reply: "You were not brought into the world to trade, my son, and neither shall you."

When he returned to England, Fate once more interfered with his life, and he fell desperately in love. It was a short and stormy affair, ending in a letter that broke his engagement and his heart at the same time. James Brooke retired within himself, and renounced forever the idea of matrimony. Not very long after this the young lady died.

Finding himself thrown upon the world, restless and embittered, James Brooke once more approached his father, and Thomas Brooke, tired of this unhappy and impetuous son, helped him to purchase the brig *Findlay*, in partnership with a certain Captain Kennedy. She was loaded with a fine cargo, and it seemed as if this was the answer to his prayer, instead of which it was merely the turning over of a leaf in the history of this great man's life. Even as his father had always told him, James Brooke had not been brought into the world to be a trader; his destiny was to be a lonely man on a lonely quest, culminating in a country and a crown.

In 1833 Thomas Brooke died and left a small fortune in his son's eager, willing hands. Thirty thousand pounds seemed an immensity of money to young James, and he knew that at last he could purchase a vessel of his own. The *Royalist* was her name . . . the famous schooner yacht that was

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the first to dip her inquisitive nose into Sarawak waters.

She was of about one hundred and forty tons, with perfect lines and lovely to behold. As James Brooke stood upon her deck amongst his friends he said, "If only I could take my vessel to places where the keel of no English ship ever ploughed the waters ; if only I could plant my foot where no white man's foot had ever been before ; if I could gaze upon scenes which no educated eyes had ever looked upon, and see man in the rudest state of nature, then I should be content."

Always that dream, always that eternal vision before his eyes of some country that might be his. Egotistical perhaps, and not without vanity ; nevertheless, an ideal that was to uphold him throughout the remainder of his life.

It was while he was in Singapore that James Brooke first heard the rumours of a Borneo rebellion. He heard that their ruler, a certain Malay Prince named Raja Muda Hassim, was helpless, and he thought what an adventure it would be to go to his assistance. Just a chance, just an adventure that drove this man to the shores of his ultimate destiny.

As they skirted the islands of St Pierre and Marundam, and could see the mainland of this unknown country, James Brooke's excitement was unbounded. "At length I am on the coast of Borneo," he cried. "Our work is commenced. I have toiled and sacrificed much for this consummation, and now that it has arrived I ask myself if I feel equal to the task."

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James Brooke saw before him a coast that was almost unknown, and he had before him charts with errors of a degree and more. Even throughout the writings of his famous Diaries he could not quite explain the emotion that was within him. "Vast indeed," he wrote, "is the field which unfolds itself. My feelings I can hardly describe . . . they are not of tumultuous joy at the prospect of success, but on the contrary are rather of a composed and quiet nature . . . a fixed determination to gird up my loins and endeavour to effect an object, and to perform a service which may eventually be useful to mankind."

Leaning over the rail, he and his friends peered into the distant land that lay before them. There was no sign of habitation anywhere. As they entered the mouth of the Sarawak river it was dark with the shadows of old jungle trees and Nippa palms that stretched down to the water's edge. It was a silent river, concealed from view like a broad ribbon unfolding through mud and mangrove swamps. The little yacht thrust her inquisitive nose round the corners of it, wondering where and when it would end, and to what treasures it would lead. James Brooke, tall and elegant, a man five foot ten inches in height, with charming manners, and brilliant blue eyes that gazed from an open countenance, stood with his arms folded and a smile upon his lips. A new country . . . a new life . . . a fresh adventure, and he, one of the greatest pioneers in history, at the helm.

To the outside world all that was known of Borneo at that time was unpropitious. It was in-

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fested by Dyak Head-Hunters, and pirates who destroyed native trade and terrorized the people.

Pirates . . . Head-Hunters . . . the selling and purchasing of slaves, . . . children bargained for in the open market for thirty or sixty dollars apiece. All these things James Brooke had been told but could not, and would not, believe. What kind of a race were they who took human heads and hung them in their houses? How could he visualize this strange yet splendid tribe, whose tradition it was to obtain those gruesome relics? How could he sense the mixture of cruelty and cowardice within them? "These things cannot be," he cried. "And if they are, they must not be. God has made me the man who will one day be the suppresser of head-hunting and slavery in Sarawak."

When James Brooke landed in Kuching for the first time, not one of these natives who crowded down to see him had ever gazed upon a white man before. They pushed and jostled and gathered so closely round him that he could hardly move. Some of them were a little sceptical as to his being the same colour all over, and conveyed to him that they would consider it an honour if he would remove his clothes. They begged him to show them his arms and his body. They were so courteous and good-tempered that he felt it was his duty to give them some sort of satisfaction, so he turned up his trousers and let them see the colour of his legs, which they examined with the greatest interest.

Now James Brooke was the shyest of men amongst strangers, and, being unable to speak

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Malay, he felt awkward and uncomfortable gesticulating before this unintelligible tribe. By the time he reached the audience hall he was exhausted and pouring with sweat.

The audience hall was filled with the assembled chiefs; in the midst of them stood Pangeran Muda Hassim and his fourteen brothers.

There could not have been a simpler or less glamorous scene than the first entry of James Brooke into the country that was so soon to become his own. The room was full of these small and gentle people, who gazed at him with kindness and perplexity. Their sad brown eyes seemed to melt into the brownness of their faces. Occasionally they smiled, but hastily and secretly as if it was impolite. They were richly dressed in embroidered coats and trousers, and sarongs of the heaviest gold. They never spoke unless they were addressed, and even then they left the Pangeran Muda Hassim to reply.

James Brooke took an immediate fancy to this native Prince. He liked his intelligent but homely countenance, and the grace and ease of his behaviour. From the day they first met in Kuching, they started a friendship that did not end until the tragic death of Pangeran Muda Hassim.

Muda Hassim endeavoured to explain through an interpreter the condition of his State, and how it had been goaded into rebellion by the ill-treatment of one man. "The Sultan of Borneo's proper name is Omar Ali," he said, "and he it is who is the ruler of the coast which extends from Cape Datu to



Maludu Bay. Sarawak is desperate, and I am in despair. Pangeran Makota, who is our Governor, is an evil and unscrupulous man. I have been sent here by my uncle, the Sultan, to put down the rebellion, and to restore order. In this I have failed. But this is not war," he added, "it is merely a little child's play amongst my subjects that I cannot quell." But James Brooke's blue eyes saw through the little Malay's armour of unconcern, and he felt that it was his duty to protect these inoffensive people against the enemy that ruled them. What strange power had this man Makota, and why was it that he was so much stronger than the Malayan Prince?

The answer came with Makota himself, who arrived on a visit to Kuching. Makota, round and good-humoured, appeared to be the most companionable of men, with his genial smile, behind which there was cruelty unbelievable. He was a far more talented man than any other in Sarawak. He could write poetry and recount legends with the most exquisite taste. James Brooke said to himself, "I must be careful of this one, and of all others he is the one I must most avoid."

With manners schooled by dissimulation Makota endeavoured to persuade James Brooke to tell him the reason of his visit there. What was he doing on those shores, and why had he made so long a voyage at so great an expense? Was it merely to explore, to survey the coast, or to collect specimens of natural history, or had he come for warlike purposes? Perhaps this white man was a secret

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agent of the British Government, or the chosen envoy of the Governor of Singapore. For the first time in his evil life Makota was afraid.

"You will remain with us?" Pangeran Muda Hassim enquired anxiously of this Englishman. "I am greatly in need of you."

James Brooke turned to Makota. "And you," he said, "are you also in need of me?"

Makota smiled—Makota was always smiling. "You already have the answer," he replied softly. "For you are a better diplomat than I am."

It was not an easy task for James Brooke, who was a stranger in this country and could not speak one word of the native tongue. "It is all so adverse to anything I had in view," he cried despairingly. "I want to help you, but I do not seem to know in what direction my services must be."

There was only one course left open to him, and that was to go himself to the root of the rebellion. But with Makota at the head of the army he had little hope of being able to put an end to this war. He told Muda Hassim that he would put down the rebellion on condition that he himself was leader, and not Makota.

With tears in his eyes Muda Hassim confessed that he was afraid of the Governor of Sarawak, and that he dared not put this Englishman in his place.

"Very well," replied James Brooke. "Then, as you have chosen against me, what use is there for me to remain any more amongst you?"

Poor little Pangeran Muda Hassim, poor little

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trembling Prince with no personality beyond a dreamy sweetness that no one at that time could appreciate or understand. He was distracted. He begged and implored James Brooke to stay with him. Then, in an agony of passion, he declaimed shrilly so that all might hear: "If only you will remain I will give you even my country. I will give you even my Government, and my trade. All these things you can have, you and your generation after you, if only you will not desert me now in my hour of need."

I wonder what must have been the feelings of this man when he heard those words for the first time? I wonder if he could believe his ears that this thing had really come to pass? A country had been offered to him; Sarawak had been thrown at his feet, with its Government and its trade. He would be a king in a kind of way, he, James Brooke, the little boy who had journeyed from Secore. He would be the ruler of an Eastern State, this simple gentleman from Bath.

James Brooke showed no sign of the emotion that was within him. He replied slowly and carefully, although his voice sounded deep and hoarse in his own ears. "I will discuss your offer at a later date," he said.

It was so characteristic of this man that at that very moment he should be wrestling within himself between what was right and what was wrong. He wanted to accept Sarawak, indeed he meant to accept it all the time, but it seemed to him wrong that all his life he should remember it had been the

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heirloom of Pangeran Muda Hassim's deep distress. Supposing he had never said to the little Malayan Prince that he would leave Sarawak; supposing he had never threatened to desert him in his greatest hour of need, would that offer ever have been made? James Brooke was essentially a fair man, and just in all his dealings; he could not help feeling that he had wrung the offer of this country from the lips of a defenceless ruler.

He was confident that he could quell the rebellion with only a handful of bluejackets at his heels. Again his arrogance, again the vanity that carried him so far. If he could put down the rebellion, did he not deserve the reward Muda Hassim had held out to him? He could rule Sarawak and place the country once more upon its feet.

There was one man in Sarawak James Brooke really loved, and he was Pangeran Muda Hassim's brother, Badrudin. Here was a Malay who could stand side by side with the Englishman in dignity and strength. They were inseparable, those two. James Brooke gave Badrudin his signet ring to wear and said to him, "If ever you are in any danger when I am not with you, send me this ring, and wherever I am, I will obey your call."

All his life Badrudin wore the ring, until it was returned, blood-stained and rusty, into James Brooke's unhappy hands.

Badrudin worked and fought side by side with his friend, and was ever close to him. The two men had an understanding that passed belief, considering the distance of race there was between them.



*From the painting by Sir Francis Grant, P R A , now in the National Portrait Gallery*

*W. Ke*



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They charged across the padi fields together with a few Dyaks and seamen at their heels. They swarmed on to the ridges above the river, and into the hollows where the rebels lay concealed. Then there ensued the most incredible disorder—enemy everywhere trying to escape. On and on they went, driving the rebels into the swirling river below. James Brooke's victory was bloodless but complete. The rebellion was at an end.

So it was that with only a handful of Englishmen and a few native boatmen this amazing adventurer put down the rebellion of 1840 in Sarawak—a rebellion that was looked upon by the Malays as one of the most important incidents in the history of their country. James Brooke returned triumphantly to Kuching. He was received with acclamation, and treated as a god, but never a word said Pangeran Muda Hassim about giving up his country, and never a word said James Brooke to the little Malayan Prince. He waited, that was all; waited and watched, and wondered whether the promises of Muda Hassim were as frail as his Government, and whether his affection was as shallow as his word.

And while James Brooke waited he wrote the famous Diary that was afterwards destroyed almost in its entirety during the Chinese insurrection. He wrote long letters to his mother and tried to describe the country that was one day to be his. "The object I have in hand is so great," he wrote, "that self is quite lost when I consider it . . . even failure of my attempt would be better than no attempt at all. . . . Sarawak has been chosen as the seat of my

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labours, and I would make of it a stepping-stone across the Island of Borneo from one side to the other."

James Brooke could not and would not believe that he was deliberately being cheated out of the fulfilment of his dreams. He still clung to the idea that it was nothing but the apathy of the native character that was causing the delay. He did not realize that behind the weakness of Pangeran Muda Hassim there was Makota's treachery—Makota, determined to drive this adventurer from the country he was stirring and disturbing; Makota, evil and whispering at Muda Hassim's elbow, telling him what to do, and inciting him against the Englishman's claim. "Be true to one of us, that is all I ask of you," James Brooke said to the Malayan Prince. "Believe me, I have not determined on settling in Borneo without the most mature and serious deliberation. I mean to succeed."

It was not until the 24th of September, 1841, that the document James Brooke had waited for so long was drawn up, sealed, signed, and delivered. Amidst the roar of cannons, and a general display of flags and banners, this simple Englishman from Bath was proclaimed Raja of Sarawak.

The purport of the document was as follows:

SARAWAK, 1841.

*Transfer by Pangeran Muda Hassim of the  
Government of SARAWAK*

This agreement made in the year of the Prophet one thousand two hundred and fifty-seven, at



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twelve o'clock on Wednesday the thirtieth day of the month of Rejab; sheweth that with a pure heart and high integrity PANGERAN MUDA HASSIM, son of the late Sultan Muhammad, hereby transfers to James Brooke Esquire, the Government of Sarawak, together with the dependencies thereof, its revenue, and all its future responsibilities. Moreover he, James Brooke Esquire, shall be the sole owner of its revenues, and will be alone responsible for the public expenditure necessary for the good of Sarawak. Moreover, James Brooke Esquire, acting with the same integrity and pureness of heart, accepts this agreement as set forth, and further undertakes from the date hereof to pay the Sultan of Brunei one thousand dollars, to Pangeran Muda one thousand dollars, to the Pettinggi three hundred dollars, to the Bandar one hundred and fifty dollars, and to the Temonggong one hundred dollars.

Moreover, James Brooke Esquire undertakes that the laws and customs of the Malays of Sarawak shall forever be respected since the country of Sarawak has hitherto been subject to the Government of the Sultan of Brunei, Pangeran Muda and Malayan Rajas.

Moreover, should intrigue arise within or without the State of Sarawak detrimental to its interests, whether caused by peoples, or princes, or rulers who may be inimical to Sarawak; the Sultan and his brother the Pangeran Muda shall uphold James Brooke Esquire, subject to no interference by any other person.

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Moreover, the Pangeran Muda and James Brooke Esquire do themselves make this contract, and the Pangeran agrees to relinquish all further activities on the Government of Sarawak, except such as may be carried out by the consent of James Brooke Esquire, and anything which they may severally or individually do in regard to the Government of Sarawak, must be in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

Written in Sarawak on the night, Friday the second day of Shaaban, 1257, at ten o'clock.

And so it was that at the age of thirty-eight this adventurous pioneer, who had merely set forth on a sailing expedition, became the supreme ruler of an unknown country. "He had taken his vessel to places where the keel of no English ship had ever before ploughed the waters . . . he had planted his foot where no white man's foot had ever been before . . ." a lone man on a lonely quest had found at last the fulfilment of his dreams.

Raja Brooke had failings in his nature, failings that had been part of his charm as an ordinary citizen but became dangerous to him as a ruler. His great frankness and readiness to believe that all men were what they professed to be, led him into many dark places during his reign. "I cannot play the hypocrite," he would cry, "even if I wished it. I cannot pretend a friendship when I feel none. . . . I will carry on no system of humbug. . . . I will work on and on and on, and if I fail, my conscience will help to support me in my failure."

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He felt that his had been the trumpet call of Providence to govern these people, and it was this call alone that led him on. He did not feel that he was himself any longer, but an instrument of justice, doomed only to reap where he had sown. Willingly he tied himself, body and mind, to the stake, and heaped faggots round himself. He stood, as it were, upon a cask of gunpowder, and if his people brought the torch and set light to him, he would not shrink. He felt so strongly within him that he was doing right. The oppressed, the wretched, the enslaved, had called to him to be their protector. "They now hope and trust," he wrote in his Diary. "And they shall not be disappointed. The issue of this I do not know, it is in God's hands . . . surely the turn of my life is better in God's hands than in my own?"

So he began his reign. Bit by bit he began to introduce law and order into his country, and to make the down-trodden and pillaged people feel secure. He found that some of the tribes of the interior were even more savage than he had dreamed. He heard strange tales of the inhuman customs practised by the pirates. Slaves were captured and used as sacrifices for the death of some relation. They were bound round with loin-cloths, and after some preliminary dancing and singing, one after another of their captors would thrust his spear into the victim, each one sending a message to their deceased friend or relation as they did so. Sometimes these slaves were crucified and then speared. Certain of the tribes believed

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that the passage for men into paradise was over a long tree, and could not be traversed unless they had killed a slave. These slaves were bargained for and bought at the lowest prices. "Why should we waste of our goods," they said, "to purchase a human sacrifice?"

The Raja became very friendly with the Sea Dyaks, and he would squat on the floor with them for many hours listening to their legends and watching the grace and beauty of their barbaric dance. He would show them how high he could leap in the air, and many of his card tricks, and how he could bend a spear across his knees. He endeavoured to learn their customs and omens and beliefs, and how, when they went into battle, or planted their rice, they would only do so if the omens were happy. For instance, the most evil of all omens was called "Sabut," and this ill omen would warn them against the danger of death. It would be conveyed to them by means of an uncommon alteration in the note of a bird, or an unusual noise made by the domestic pig, or the cry of a deer, or some strange sounds produced by brassware in the house, that rattled and shook of its own accord within their living-room. Whenever any of these sounds was heard the family would immediately depart, and the house would remain deserted. If the Dyaks were upon some expedition, they would turn back and refuse to continue on their way. They believed, so they informed James Brooke, that the birds and the animals and the brass would for a time become spirits who were able to convey warnings that

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should not be disregarded. "Dreams tell us of our woes," they would say. "Dreams tell us of the joys and good fortune of mankind. It would be impious to disobey a vision or a dream, for they are sent to us by the Celestial Power, for the ultimate guidance of man."

James Brooke discovered that there were certain Manangs (witch doctors) in Sarawak who seemed to have been ordained for the purpose of saving the lives of men, and when a person was thus ordained, it was sacrilege to call him or her merely a Dyak. . . . These men were, in a way, holy men, and the Dyaks believed in them as they believed in their gods.

There were two kinds of Manangs, the terrestrial and the celestial. The terrestrial Manang exorcized evil spirits which were supposed to be the cause of all illness. He appeared to possess some knowledge of herbal remedies, but he depended mostly for his cures upon incantations, in which he would call upon the gods of the hills and forests to help him drive away the evil spirits. This Manang was by no means above using deceit of the worst kind in order to improve the occasion, and would often pretend when attending a sick person to catch the soul (Samengat) as it was leaving the body, and put it back into the body a minute before it was too late, thereby saving the invalid from death.

A man or a woman would become a Manang in obedience to the command of some spirit conveyed to them in a dream. To have disregarded the command would have meant punishment by death or

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madness by the enraged spirits, who, according to them, expected their commands to be fulfilled. To become a Manang Manseau was the highest attainment of all Manangs, and it meant "The Ripe Witch Doctor." The ceremony of initiation to such an honour would begin with a sacrifice to the gods who belonged to that particular Manang. This sacrifice would vary in the different districts. Sometimes it would consist of one pig, one fowl, one egg, etc. Several other Manang Manseau were paid to attend. They would walk round the candidate holding *Pilang Arica* blossoms in their hands. With these they would rub the man's head. He would then lie down on a mat in a simulated unconsciousness. He would be surrounded by raw rice, and a camphor-wood stake would be placed across his body. They would pretend to put gold dust in his eyes, and to insert fish-hooks into his finger-tips. The gold dust was to enable him to see spirits, and the fish-hooks were intended to catch the souls of his patients, and to restrain them from breaking from their physical connection with the earth.

A feast would be held in the house, and all the Manangs would walk round and about the house, and intone a prayer to the gods begging them to help the newly made Manang with his cures.

The man would then rise from his mat and show some charms, a boar's tusk, or a stone which he would hold in his hand and declare that he had obtained from the spirits in Hades during his trance. His brother Manangs would then present him with various charms which he would put in his sacred

box (Lupong), and which would, so they would say, assist him in his cures. The man was then prepared to be called upon to attend cases of great illness.

There was a famous medicine-man, or Manang, who had a dream ordering him to change his sex. He had been obliged to obey, and strange as it may seem, he had been enabled to do so by the gods.

James Brooke realized the immensity of the burden he had placed upon his shoulders, for until he could learn to understand these people and stand side by side with them and their superstitions, he knew that he would be unable to judge or to control them. Here was a race steeped in omens and dreams, committing crimes because their gods commanded them. Was his word to be law, or would these gods of theirs stand between him and his people for all time?

Whenever he accused a Dyak of a theft, the Dyak would reply that he had been the recipient of imperative commands from the gods to steal. One Dyak told him that he had already been fined six times for theft, but that he intended to steal once more in order to complete the number of times ordered by the gods. "If I do this," he said, "after my final theft I shall become an extremely wealthy man."

A woman told him the tale of how she had committed adultery several times upon the instructions of her gods, conveyed to her in dreams. "If I fail to obey them," she explained, "they have told me that I will come to an untimely end, or else be driven crazy by them."

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Newly married couples often divorced because of some evil sign from their gods, and the same reason was put forth to account for the breaking of bargains or pledges. Whatever sin they would commit, it would have been a dream or an omen that had been the cause. Truly the pathway of James Brooke was a narrow one between the cunningness of crime and the genuine belief in the strange gods of these people.

James Brooke fought many battles with rebel Dyaks and with pirates, and gradually news of these battles reached as far as England and the British Government raised up its head and began to snuff a menace. Who was this man who had landed in a far-away country and had been made its ruler? What was this fantastic tale of an Englishman who had become the Raja of a race whose language he could hardly speak? What kind of a man was this, who was fighting cannibals and pirates almost single-handed in the vast interior of a Malayan jungle, and what right had he to massacre innocent people, condemning them himself as head-hunters and rebels?

From the pages of James Brooke's famous Diaries there came this exceeding bitter cry: "I have at last a country, but oh, how ravaged by war, how torn by dissension, and ruined by duplicity, weakness and intrigue."

From the British Government there came the retort: "What right has this stranger to judge or interfere? How can he, an ordinary English citizen, understand or rule a heathen race?"



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And yet, in spite of all this criticism and controversy, James Brooke's days were not all unpleasantly spent. There were times when he remained in Kuching in what he would refer to, with a twinkle in his blue eyes, as his "Palace." This consisted of a very simple building that Muda Hassim had had built for him, mounted on numerous posts made out of Nibong palm. It was about fifty feet square, extremely ugly, but extraordinarily compact. The view from the house was exquisite. To the east the broad and winding river of Sarawak, and to the west the lovely Matang Mountain fading into the sky. More rivers to the north and south, and the dense black jungle stretching as far as the horizon. It was cool at nearly all times of the day, cool with the land breeze, or the sea, and it was in this rude building that the famous man wrote the Diaries that might have been, had they been saved entirely from fire, of such immense interest and value to Sarawak. James Brooke would read and study languages and draw up charts. In the evenings he would walk. There were no wines and spirits out there in those early days, so that it had not been worth while for him to entertain. At eleven o'clock he would be driven to bed by the sand-flies and mosquitoes.

James Brooke was obliged to journey to Brunei in order to obtain from the Sultan an official confirmation of his appointment as Raja of Sarawak. This letter, giving Sarawak to him, was publicly read with all the pomp and state that could be attained. The document was carried in the midst

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of large wax torches, and the man who was to read it stood upon a raised platform. On the steps below stood Muda Hassim with a curved sabre in his hand, and in front of Muda Hassim was his brother, Pangeran Jaffir, also with a drawn sword. Round him were all the other brothers—before whom, tall and straight and commanding, stood James Brooke, Raja of Sarawak. The document was then read in a high-pitched voice that remained on one key throughout the reading. When the reading was over, Muda Hassim descended from the steps and turned to the people and said, "Are there any of you here who contest the Sultan's appointment? For, if you do, you are to make it known to me."

No one answered. Muda Hassim then went from man to man asking them the same question, until at last he reached as far as Makota. "What have you to say, Pangeran Makota?" he asked, and looked down at the expressionless face of his late Governor. There was a long pause, and every head was turned towards the man who had been James Brooke's sworn enemy. Would he refuse to acknowledge this Englishman as Raja? Was this, perhaps, the moment he had been waiting for? The moment in which publicly to denounce one whom he considered unworthy of this country? There was not a sound in the entire Court House as they waited breathlessly for Makota to speak. But Makota did not speak; he merely lowered his pale lids over the darkness of his eyes, and scarcely moving his lips he whispered his willingness to obey.

Muda Hassim then shouted to the other traitors:

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“What about you—and you—and you? Let any of you so much as dare contest the Sultan’s appointment, and his head shall be split in two.”

The moment he had spoken these words, ten of his brothers drew their swords and moved towards Makota and his friends. They leaped and they danced, and they flourished their long blades round Makota’s head. Had he so much as made one movement, it would most assuredly have been his last. But strange to say, this man, who was a notorious coward, sat absolutely still. It may have been that he was paralysed with fear, it may have been that he knew that if he looked up he would have screamed for mercy. Strange are the workings of Fate. If Makota had been murdered on that day, many thousands of lives in after years might have been spared.

So James Brooke became the recognized ruler of Sarawak from one end to the other. He and a coloured interpreter from Malacca, and a servant who could neither read nor write, and a shipwrecked Irishman who was as brave as a lion, and a doctor who was a first-rate companion but so little interested in the country he was in that he never even took the trouble to learn its language. Just that small community of white men, mongrels most of them, alone in this out-of-the-way land, endeavouring to rule over a people they could not understand. Sarawak was a country rich and fine for cultivation. Rice could be grown, coffee, nutmegs in abundance, and perhaps cotton. There was this wide and generous river threading its way

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throughout the territory. The climate generally was healthy; the Malays kindly and loyal. They had nicknamed the Raja, "Bujang Brani," which being translated meant "The Brave Bachelor"; he was very proud of this name—until he found out afterwards that it was the name of one of the most famous pirates in Sarawak.

Some of the Dyak tribes became troublesome and restless, and made several murderous excursions into the interior. James Brooke captured the most dangerous and ferocious pirate of them all. He was obliged to take his prisoners down-river to a place called "Lentang," to the Long House of one of their relations. On the way the pirate spoke to the Raja of many things but never once did he plead for his life. As they were nearing the Long House the pirate asked him this question. "Tuan," he said, "what makes the noses of the white man so large and straight? Do your nurses pull them out every morning when you are young, or is it natural?" Then he touched his own whimsically. "See, Tuan," he added, "see how soft and small my nose is; do what I will I cannot make mine improve in any way."

It was an unhappy moment for James Brooke when this so-called formidable enemy was led into the Long House, and there strangled. The mode of this execution the Raja described in his Diary as being "Unfortunate but exceedingly refined." The prisoner was placed inside a thick mosquito-curtain, and the cord of the curtain twisted round his neck from behind. This ferocious pirate did

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not die easily. He kept repeating as long as he could speak, "What? Are you having me put to death just for killing Chinese?" It was not until he was on the point of expiring that he cried out, "Mercy! Mercy!"

The other prisoners met with a more ordinary death. They were what was known as "Krissed." Their hands were held out, and the long knife or Kriss, having been fixed within the clavicle bone on the left side, was driven down straight to their hearts. Each pirate smiled as the Kriss was fixed, for this was a death they understood and did not mind. "So ends this wretched and bloody business," said the Raja, gazing sadly upon the victims, "which nothing but a stern sense of its necessity would have induced me to consent to . . . that they deserved death unfortunately none can doubt."

But from that moment James Brooke made up his mind to change permanently the laws of punishment in Sarawak. For instance, the cutting off of one of the prisoner's hands for theft. "Three dozen lashes laid on by the boatswain," he said, "would be of equally good result." So he started corporal punishment in place of mutilation.

Bit by bit he endeavoured to form a government that his people could rely on and have trust in. "Sarawak belongs to the Malays," was his constant cry. "It belongs to the Sea Dyaks, Land Dyaks, Kayans, Milanos, Muruts, and any other tribe but my own. I would like the whole world to hear that a son of Europe has made himself forever a friend of the Sarawak Dyaks." The Dyaks at last

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began to look upon this Englishman as rather more than mortal. They thought he had been sent down by some favourable spirit to live among them and save them from destruction. In the evenings, when he would squat alone among two or three hundred of them, they would sing an incantation in honour of his valour.

"You are a bachelor full of age," they would sing, "so agile that you can cut away the drooping corner of a man's turban while springing past him.

"You are the Long Sword sweeping off the long sheathed Nibong Palm.

"You are the crocodile from the mouth of the Angit, that bites off the head of the Mouse-Deer.

"You are the comb of the champion fighting-cock that never runs away.

"You are the wall tied up closely.

"You are the tiger from the summit of Talong, with the throat encircled with blood."

The Raja would delight in these evenings, evenings with naked bronze bodies and smoking torches, and the curious guttural chatter of these tribes. There was one legend in particular he would make them tell him over and over again, a little story that reminded him of a twisted fairy-tale that he had read so many years ago. It was called "Tangga Beji" (the Ladder of Beji), and as far as he could understand it, this was its outline:

Once upon a time there lived a most inquisitive man by the name of Beji. He was more or less a giant in build, and was exceedingly powerful. He desired to know the height of the heavens, and was

confident that he could make a ladder to reach them. When he had reached the heavens he boasted that he would be able to ascertain what they were made of, and further, he would be looked up to by his neighbours when he had accomplished the task.

Relying upon his gigantic strength, he commenced to make his ladder. He felled a huge tree to form the first part of it, but it was a soft kind of wood. He kept on joining pieces of wood on to it as rapidly as his skill and strength would allow him; and at length it rose to a tremendous height. Then all his neighbours began to admire him. But whilst he kept joining pieces on to his ladder at the top, the white ants kept working hard at it and eating into it down below. At last the ladder had nearly reached the heavens, and Beji could no longer be seen when he was working at the very top of it. One day when he was working at the top of it, the white ants completed its destruction. They ate night and day through the ladder, until at last it fell to the ground, and so Beji died. Pieces of the ladder are to be seen occasionally in the different rivers, and they are known as "Tangga Beji" to this day.

It was not until James Brooke saw these Dyaks take a head, not until he was an actual witness of the hideous ceremony which took place, that he realized that in spite of their traditions this barbaric custom had got to be suppressed.

He saw the head being brought on shore with tremendous ceremony, wrapped up in the curiously folded and plaited leaves of the Nippa Palm. He

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saw the Dyaks crowding round and treating the head with the greatest consideration, calling it names, and lavishing such terms of endearment upon it as their simple minds were capable of. The most dainty morsels culled from their abundant but inelegant repast were thrust into its mouth, and it was instructed to hate its former friends, for, having now been adopted into the tribe of its captors, its spirit must always be with them. Sirih leaves and Betel Nut it was given, and finally a cigar was placed between its ghastly lips. None of this disgusting mockery was performed with the intention of ridicule but to propitiate the spirit by kindness, and to procure its good wishes for the tribe of whom it was now supposed to be a member.

The Raja looked round at the faces of the little children and wondered why they were not afraid. There were other heads hanging from a slanting piece of wood, heads that had had the brains scooped out through the nostrils, and had been hung up to dry in the smoke of a wood-fire. Implements of war lay upon the matting, and there were little baskets, destined to receive heads, slung to the side of every man. These baskets were very neatly plaited and ornamented with gaily coloured shells; some of them were even swathed round and about with human hair. Yet the children ran up and down and played, and laughed loudly at one another, just as if there was nothing in that room so ugly that even Raja Brooke was obliged to turn away his eyes.

The Dyaks did not seem to realize that they were



either cowardly or cruel; most of the heads that had been taken with the greatest delight had been severed while the owners were asleep; cunning with them was the utmost perfection of warfare. For instance, a young Dyak went up-country with a Chinese trader, and on his way he made the acquaintance of a very beautiful girl from the Saribas. She became very fond of him, for he was upright and handsome, so he went to her house and lived there with her for a while. Then one night when she was asleep he murdered her, and ran away with her head.

There was another young Dyak who wanted to win favour in the eyes of his chosen girl, so he cut off his father's head and gave it to the girl as a present; he then explained that the reason he had done this was that his father was a very old man, and would not be wanting his head much longer, anyway.

One of the principal incentives for obtaining heads was the intense desire to please their women. It dated from an ancient Sakaran legend which told the tale of the daughter of their great ancestors. She resided in heaven, so they said, quite close to the Evening Star, and she refused to marry until her betrothed brought her a present worthy of her acceptance. The young man went into the jungle and killed a deer which he presented to her, but the fair lady turned away in disdain. He went forth again and returned with the head of a *mias*, the great monkey who haunts the forests. But even this would not satisfy her. Then, in a fit of despair,

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the lover went abroad and killed the first man he met, and returning, threw his victim's head at the maiden's feet and said, "See to what cruelty thou hast forced me."

A smile came into the maiden's beautiful face as she drew the warrior to her arms. "At last thou hast discovered the only gift worthy of my love," she replied. "For now I shall have a dried head to nurse when thou art absent from me, which will remind me of thy prowess."

The Malays of Sarawak were very different to these distant tribes. They were gentle and helpless and without ambition. The only Malay the Raja ever knew who seemed to have risen beyond this mild simplicity was Muda Hassim's brother, Badrudin, but beyond him they were all alike, with no desires beyond the shelter of their homes. Badrudin stood out like an orchid from the darkest jungle tree, he was the one clear and perfect link in this lonely Englishman's life out East.

But he was not satisfied with the progress he had made towards bringing peace and prosperity to the country. The Malays were not satisfied. It preyed upon his mind, this feeling of dissatisfaction, and affected his whole body and his health. Night after night he would lie awake disturbed by the knowledge that he was a disappointment to his people. "I am merely the root," he wrote in his Diary, "from which the main stem of this country grows. But the old soil has not been properly destroyed, it has been merely turned and returned, and fresh soil added to it . . . the rottenness and

bitterness are there but a few inches below the surface of my rule."

Then one of the greatest blows that James Brooke suffered during the whole of his reign descended upon him. Muda Hassim, Badrudin, and every member of that royal family were murdered by order of the Sultan of Brunei. The thing that deep down in his soul he had been dreading and had foreseen had finally come to pass. Without the slightest warning, the houses of Muda Hassim and Badrudin and eleven others were surrounded in the dead of night, and villainously attacked. "Nothing can make up for the loss of Badrudin," said the Raja with the tears streaming down his face. "A nobler, a braver, or more upright Prince could not have existed. I have lost the friend I loved most in all the world."

Badrudin had learned to fight like an Englishman and he died like a hero, and James Brooke could not help a feeling of pride, even in the midst of his sorrow, that this man had proved himself of so gallant a nature. He heard the details of the massacre from one of Badrudin's personal and favourite servants, a boy called Jaffir who had been able to escape. It appeared that the Sultan Omar Ali, after appointing Muda Hassim his successor, resolved upon cutting down the whole family on account of their fidelity to Raja Brooke. It had not been difficult to carry out. The Sultan had round him a set of scoundrels equal to none in villainy and vice. He had his own illegitimate children who exercised an influence over him.

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Preparations for this dastardly deed were made secretly and with haste. On the night of April the 5th, 1846, when Muda Hassim and his brothers were not together in their customary way but had remained in their respective houses, the opportunity the Sultan had been waiting for occurred. The signal was given, and bands of armed men left the Palace and paddled their boats silently along the dark banks of the river. They landed cautiously and unobserved. The attack on each house was simultaneous. The young Princes had but few followers with them at the time. Badrudin fought gallantly to defend the entrance to his house. He cut down several of his assailants, but in so doing he was shot in the left wrist. His shoulder and chest were cut open as they endeavoured to disable his right hand. A woman by the name of Noon Salum fought close to him, and was also wounded in attempting to defend him. His sister and the slave boy Jaffir, although bleeding and exhausted, remained with him to the end. These four people retired fighting into the heart of the house, and barred the door. Badrudin was too proud, too noble a Prince to let himself be taken prisoner. Badly wounded and streaming with blood he ordered Jaffir to bring down from the shelf above their heads a cask of gunpowder. He ordered him to break in the head of the cask and scatter the powder in a circle round him. Then he told the boy to escape. He took the signet ring that Raja Brooke had given him from his finger, and handed it to Jaffir. "Take this ring to my

friend," he whispered faintly, "and implore him never to forget me. I also wish him to tell the Queen of England of my fate."

He then called the women near him, and as soon as the boy Jaffir had dropped through the flooring into the river, Badrudin fired the gunpowder, and all of them were blown sky-high and scattered to the winds.

Muda Hassim had been attacked at the same time, and after a vain but glorious defence he also had been badly wounded and unable to escape. He also had had his pride, and at the last moment there had come to this timid, kindly creature a great strength and a splendid dignity. He shot himself before his murderers could lay their blood-stained hands upon him. Thus perished a weak but upright little Malay whose only real sin in the Sultan's eyes had been his belief in the English adventurer to whom he had relinquished his rule.

Of the fourteen brothers, only two of them had been able to escape. One, Muda Mahomed, had been desperately wounded, and the other became insane.

"Violent passions and sleepless nights are hard to bear," James Brooke wrote wearily after he had received the news. "I lay no blame on anyone. I look forward as much as I can, and backward as little . . . but I ought not and cannot forget my poor friends who lie in their bloody graves . . . my friends, my most unhappy friends all perished for their faithful adherence to me and to my policy. Every

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man of ability, every man even of thought in Borneo, is dead . . . and as for Badrudin, my love for him was deeper than for anyone I know."

Another disaster followed closely upon the heels of the Brunei massacre. One of the Raja's young officers was drowned, an officer he had neither liked nor trusted. Williamson had fallen into the river from his boat, after having dined at the Raja's house, and was never seen again. Later, when accusations were brought up in England against James Brooke by his enemies, it was alleged that he himself had thrown young Williamson out of the boat and murdered him.

It seemed as if, at that time, the Raja was submerged in a whirlpool of misadventure. This noble and chivalrous Englishman was being driven into a corner by the treachery of those in England who had pretended to serve him and his cause. Traitors everywhere endeavoured to pull down the little he had raised. He made up his mind that he would return to England and answer his accusers face to face.

James Brooke's reception in London was of such a nature that it brought the tears into his eyes—the dense crowds that cheered him, the throngs of people closing in on him to see what sort of a man this was who had, in a way, been made a king. To the masses in the street he was a hero. His story had filled the public's ears with its unusual glamour. "If only Badrudin could have heard these applauses," was the only remark that the Raja was heard to make. "If only he could have

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known that he had not died for a useless and failing cause.”

On October 25th, 1847, the Raja was received at Windsor Castle by Queen Victoria and presented to her and the Prince Consort. Queen Victoria asked him how it was that he found it so easy to manage so many thousands of wild men of Borneo, and the Raja replied with a twinkle in his blue eyes, “Madam, I find it easier to govern thirty thousand Malays and Dyaks than to manage a dozen of your Majesty’s politicians.” It was while on this visit to England that James Brooke made the acquaintance of Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts, and a strange friendship was born, a friendship that matured into a perfect understanding and loyalty to one another. She it was who financed him so faithfully every time he was in need. A strong, masterful woman was Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts, stronger perhaps than the man she was befriending, but from the day she first met him to the day he died, she was never known to fail him. When the Raja returned to Singapore the news reached him that Her Majesty the Queen had been pleased to confer upon him the Order of the Bath, and so in November, 1848, the little boy from Secore who had set out on this great adventure became Sir James Brooke, Raja of Sarawak. He was at that time forty-five years of age.

When Sir James Brooke returned to Sarawak he was accorded a tremendous welcome. “I feel more happy in this country,” he said, “than anywhere else in the world . . . for this is indeed my home.”

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Kuching was still the minutest of towns, consisting of about seven thousand inhabitants. The shopkeepers were Chinese, and one or two Indian merchants who dealt in silk and various materials. There was not much trade on account of the unsettled conditions along the coast which prevented any ship from entering. The Raja again turned his attention to the suppression of piracy, and he succeeded in giving these raiders a lesson they were never likely to forget. Again the rumours reached England that this man, who had hitherto been open and chivalrous in all his dealings, had massacred innocent people, that they had not been pirates at all, and that Sir James Brooke was an unscrupulous, cruel, and exceedingly dangerous man.

It was Mr Gladstone who launched this attack: Mr Gladstone knew the purport of Sir James Brooke's policy from a document that had been sent to him from Sarawak. In his statement the Raja wrote these words: "To quieten this coast the only way is to teach the Seribas tribes a severe lesson. . . . The Seribas are all against us, and all are against them. . . . The Seribas and Skrang pirates are not fair examples of Dyak life. . . . The Dyaks are my friends, the Seribas are the enemies of us all. Not only are they pirates, but they are cannibals and Head-Hunters, and I would like to wipe their tribe from the face of Sarawak."

And again he wrote a little later: "The tribes of Seribas and Skrang are powerful and dreadful pirates who ravage the coast in large fleets, and



murder indiscriminately. They are the most savage of the tribes, and delight in Head-Hunting and pillaging whether by sea or by land."

In spite of these letters a political conflict raged over the head of Sir James Brooke, and of all the wars he had been in, this parrying of words and accusations upset him the most. He was in a state of high nervous tension, and the disloyalty of the British Government against one of their own race filled him with fury and despair. He was never again the gay, even-tempered companion of former days. The exposure to which he had been subjected during his many expeditions into the interior had told upon his health, and he was continually prostrated by fever.

His only consolation was that day after day deputations of Dyaks would arrive expressing their determination to abandon piracy. "If we do," they said to him, "how can we escape from your vengeance when you go forth to attack those that are against you? How will you know us from them? How will you recognize your enemies from us, who are your friends?"

"If you see a flock of sparrows," Sir James Brooke would reply, "devouring your rice, what do you do? You try to kill them. But if by chance a harmless linnet should be amongst those sparrows, does he not run a great risk from being found in such company, and may he not also be killed? In a flock of birds it is difficult to distinguish between the mischievous and the harmless, and so my advice to you is not to be linnets, but to keep away

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from the birds who are devouring the rice." Many of these pirate chiefs had never seen a white man before except as an armed enemy against them, and their curiosity was childlike and insatiable. Sir James Brooke would take them into his room and show them his swords and his uniform. In the evenings he would arrange a magic-lantern display, when their roars of laughter would prove that even a pirate has a sense of humour. One of the magic-lantern scenes they liked the best was of a party of thieves rushing out of a churchyard where they had been robbing graves, and being pursued by skeletons who were pelting them with skulls.

It was about this time that Sir James Brooke seemed to lose hold of himself and of the country he was ruling. Fever and ague had obtained so firm a grip upon his body that his mind could not have been clear, and his temper would break out into the wildest passion if anybody advised him or attempted to cross his path. He did not even attend carefully to his letters and papers, but let them rest in a confused heap upon his table. He was at length persuaded to return to England; it was the only thing, they said, that could save his life. He arrived in England unheralded and alone; no cheering crowds, no acclamation, nobody even knew that he was there. On July 10th, 1851, a motion of enquiry into the conduct of this gallant Englishman was brought forward in Parliament, but no real evidence whatsoever could be found against him, and the motion was rejected. Even Mr Gladstone seemed to have changed his mind,

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and in a speech he bore testimony to the noble and honest character of the man to whom Sarawak had been given. Sir James Brooke should have been satisfied, but he could never quite throw off the mantle of shame that had been flung upon his shoulders. "Do not disgrace your public servants," he said in one of his memorable addresses. "Do not disgrace them by enquiries generated in the fogs of base suspicion . . . for remember, a wrong done is like a wound received, and the scar is ineffaceable . . . it may be covered by glittering decorations, but there it remains until the end."

Sir James Brooke received the usual glamorous welcome from his people on his return to Sarawak, but the Malays and all those about him noticed a puffiness about the handsome features, and saw that he, who had never lacked energy, complained several times of feeling tired. It was such an unusual symptom in this active, vigorous man that they drew closer to him and eyed him with wonder not unmixed with fear. It was then they saw that he was covered with what appeared to be mosquito bumps, only they were larger and strange looking, which made his face swollen and flushed. No medical man was present and no comment was made, until a half-Arab, half-Malay shouted out that the Tuan Raja was stricken with the smallpox. The following morning Sir James Brooke felt so weak that he was obliged to stay in bed. Day by day he grew worse, for the smallpox was a terrible disease in those days, and he had it in its most virulent form.

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Confluent smallpox they called it, and it broke out all over his body. Only one European and his Malay boy ventured near him. The devotion of these two was one of the most amazing things to behold. All the Malays were deeply moved, and every day the chiefs would sit patiently in one of the outer houses waiting for news. Prayers were offered up in the Mosque morning and evening, and the Dyaks in the interior sang incantations and called on their omens to help their friend to recover. "If he dies," they said, "our rice crops will not thrive. He is the rains, and the sun, and the moon of our existence."

At last there was a favourable turn, and the whole population was overwhelmed with joy when they were told that their Raja would live. They showered upon him presents and delicate dishes that they thought might tempt him to regain his health.

When at last Sir James Brooke rose from his bed he was almost unrecognizable, so badly had this disease ravaged his face. He was so weak that he could hardly stand. They would not let him see himself in the mirror, but the Raja knew it by the reflection in their faces. "Surely," he said to them, laughing at their disconcerted faces, "you will not like me less for being a little uglier."

He lived comparatively peacefully for a while, writing his famous Diaries and ruling in the capital. He did not go out much because of his disfigurement, but would wander alone at the back of his residence, and up the slopes of Matang Hill.

Meanwhile, there had been persistent rumours

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of a Chinese conspiracy, like the rumbling of thunder before a distant storm. Sir James Brooke summoned the Chinese chiefs and demanded if these rumours of an insurrection were true. They denied it, and he believed their denial, even going so far as to dismiss all the extra men he had posted at the forts.

On February 18th, 1857, the Chinese chiefs assembled about six hundred of their gold-workers at Bau, and placing all available weapons in their hands, began their march on Kuching.

They went up-river in large cargo-boats, and it was not until after midnight that they arrived at the town. They landed silently, and divided into two bodies. One party was sent to attack the stockades, whilst the rest of them concealed themselves in a small creek above the Raja's residence, called "Sungei Bedil." Nobody heard a sound. The whole town was asleep, only Sir James Brooke himself sat reading in his library. His residence was raised upon a little grassy slope, and round and about it there were smaller houses belonging to his officers. The Chinese crept along the banks of the stream and marched on to the attack in a body of about a hundred men. They made their attack on the front and on the back of the house, the sole inhabitants of which were the Raja and his Malay boy.

Suddenly roused by the unusual sound of shouts and yells at midnight, Sir James Brooke peered out into the night, and some instinct told him that insurrection was afoot.

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Several times he raised his revolver to fire amongst this Chinese horde above him, but he knew the futility of a few shots amongst a hundred men. The end had come! This was to be his death, after all that he had worked for; he was to be murdered by Chinese gold-workers in his own residence.

He stood upon the verandah, and a great wave of fury as in the old days broke over him. Why should he remain there to be caught like a rat in a trap? Why should he not escape? He must escape somehow. He imagined that every corner of his house was being watched. He could feel those slits of eyes upon him from the darkness. Softly he called to his Malay boy, and quietly they crept to the bathroom that opened out on to the lawn. Pushing the Malay boy behind him, Sir James Brooke flung open the door and rushed out with his revolver raised. The lawn was empty. Not a single Chinese confronted him, although he could hear round the corner of his residence the shrieks of his dying officers. Here was he, standing in his own garden alone.

Stricken with ague and fever, and over fifty years of age, he knew that to go to the rescue of his friends would only add one more death to the triumph of the Chinese. So he lowered himself into the river, dived beneath one of the barges, and swam, shivering and crippled with disease, across the muddy river, with a knife between his lips. It was a great achievement, and only this gallant adventurer would have attempted it at his age. He reached the other side and lay exhausted upon the mud-

banks. He who had once been a mighty ruler was now a fugitive, crawling by night from the remains of his burning house.

It was the insurrection that forced Sir James Brooke to realize how much of his work had been worth while, and how much he himself meant to the people of his heart. As he stole along the shadowed reaches of the river, with the little remnant of his party who had eventually escaped and joined him, friendly hands were held out to him on every side. As he stood before them, defeated and homeless, he could not have received from the Malays more delicate attention. With the very gentlest courtesy they supplied him and his followers with clothing. They fed them, and consoled them. His life's work had not been entirely in vain.

Bit by bit particulars of the insurrection reached him. An able and promising young officer, Mr Nicholets, who had but lately arrived from an out-station on a visit, had been murdered, his head severed from his body and borne on a pike in triumph through the Bazaar. Mr and Mrs Crookshanks, rushing from their bungalow, had been cut down and left for dead. Mr Middleton managed to escape from his bungalow, and his wife, endeavouring to follow, found herself trapped in her bathroom. In the meantime the Chinese had seized her two children and taken the eldest into the same bathroom. Mrs Middleton's only refuge had been in the large water-jar. From there she had heard her little boy being questioned as to which way his father had gone, and the child crying

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and pleading for his life. She had heard him shriek as the sword fell, severing his head from his body, and then she had heard a succession of thudding noises and great laughter. Peering out from the water-jar she had seen the Chinese kicking her little boy's head from one side of the bathroom to the other. They then set fire to the bungalow, and she heard the shrieks of her other child as they threw him into the flames. It has always filled me with the most profound astonishment that this woman remained sane during these proceedings, but she remained in the water-jar until the falling embers forced her to leave; then she escaped. Running out on to the lawn she concealed herself in a pond close by, and the fact that she was passed over by the Chinese was one of the miracles of this insurrection.

The Bishop collected as many women and children as he could and embarked upon a native craft to sail to another river where there was a Mission Station. It had been a very wet night, so that they had been obliged to huddle together down below to keep themselves dry. The closeness and steam during the night had been almost insufferable, but besides the steam there had been a strange eerie smell that had filled them with fear. As soon as the vessel had been brought into peaceful waters a search had been made, and a Chinese head was found beneath the place where they had been seated. It was in a Dyak basket, and belonged to one of the young Dyaks who was on board. "I procured it in the finest way possible," he explained.



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"I went into the fort which the Chinese had taken and occupied, and in one of the rooms I saw a Chinese admiring his own face in a broken glass hanging on the wall. The man did not see me, and his bare neck and stooping head were in so tempting a posture, I could not resist the impulse to whip out my sword and smite off his head with one blow."

When morning broke in Kuching it lit upon a scene of fierce confusion. The Chinese paraded the streets, half-dazed with opium and the lust of killing. The chief of the Gold Company was seated in Sir James Brooke's chair in the Court House.

This rebellion was the last fighting in which Sir James Brooke took part. After a brief interval, during which the whole of Sarawak rocked with indecision and fear, the Raja, aided by his faithful Dyaks and Malays, returned to the recovered capital. "I have found at last," he said, "and after much trial and tribulation, the country of my dreams. I know now they have need of me, and love me in their way."

With the exception of the Chinese quarters all had been burned down, including the Raja's residence and all that it contained. The perfect library it had taken him so many years to create—the best historians and essayists, poets, books of biography and travel, books of reference and theology—lay in ashes on the grass. But what was even more serious than any of these was the whole of the written evidence of his reign in Sarawak. The famous Diaries

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he had compiled with such exactitude; all of these lay with blackened leaves upon the scorched slopes of the hill. It had been the most criminal and useless waste. There had been no real organization behind it, no real leader. To Sir James Brooke alone it had not been entirely a waste, for it had proved unquestionably the strength of his policy and of his rule. He had lost his possessions and his home, but he had gained the trust of these primitive people, and their entire loyalty to his cause.

But this insurrection seemed to have an effect upon his health, and when he was alone with his Malays he showed a loss of spirit and a melancholy that was unlike him. It seemed as if the burden of this country was almost too heavy a one for him to bear. "I am weary of business," he would say, "and I wish that I were near my end. . . . I am weary . . . weary of heart, without faith, and without hope in men's honesty."

He returned to England, leaving his nephew, Captain Brooke, to reign in his stead. As soon as he reached England he realized that the attitude of the Cabinet had changed towards him. He was well received everywhere he went. Queen Victoria sent for him and spoke kindly and graciously to him of all that he had done. But his disfigurement stood between him and everyone he met. He could see it in their eyes, and feel it even as he walked into a room. Sir James Brooke had not only changed in appearance, but his whole nature had altered; he felt, so he said, as if he were half-asleep. "Life is going," he said, "and I rejoice in the hope that

my death will do for Sarawak what my life has been unable to effect." He did not know then that this feeling of lassitude was in reality his first attack of paralysis.

Then Makota died. He was murdered whilst engaged in selecting and seizing upon young girls for his own use. It was one of these girls who caused his death by holding a torch on high so that Makota could be seen escaping in a boat. A spear was thrown which grazed his shoulder, and he had fallen from the fragile boat into the river. It so happened that he had been one of the very few Malays who could not swim.

The Raja became greatly distressed in mind over the future of Sarawak. He did not feel absolutely confident about either of his nephews. "Not a single man rising in the Service," he grumbled bitterly. "Not a man who is really fitted to rule."

Maybe it was the old old story of a man's resentment against the relinquishing of power to another. Maybe it was because he had no son of his own. It was not difficult to see that Sir James Brooke was jealous of an heir, and the fact that one of his nephews was to inherit. At one time he even went so far as to leave his country to his greatest and closest friend, Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts; but eventually he altered his will and wrote to his eldest nephew: "My surrender of authority is final . . . and you must take up what I am forced to leave."

Words only, words with no real meaning even then behind them. When it came for the time for

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him to leave Sarawak, he could not and would not renounce altogether his throne. Harsh words passed between him and his nephew. Young Brooke could not understand that this country was the very breath of his uncle's body, the very reason for his existence. It had been given to Sir James Brooke; he was the Pioneer, the adventurer who had sailed from the China seas into the Sarawak river; and whilst he had thoughts in his brain, and strength in his hand, he would maintain it.

Whilst in England the Raja went in search of a small cottage in which he could end his days, and he found eventually a little house amidst the village of Sheepstor, on the western side of Dartmoor.

Sir James Brooke bought Burrator, and then returned to Sarawak for the last time. "Here in my own country," he said, "amid my own people, I wish to say a few words. I am broken in health and fortune. I look for death as my relief. Sarawak was struggling and well-nigh ruined; you gave me life and you gave me hope. Your help has enabled Sarawak to struggle through the difficulties which well-nigh overwhelmed me."

Young Brooke informed his uncle that he wished to tell the people of Sarawak that he was the lawful heir. "I shall be gratified if you will publicly instal me as Raja Muda," he said. "Not only will it be a pleasing sign of your confidence in me, but it will strengthen my hands in carrying on the Government."

This infuriated the already ill and aging man. To dot the "i's" as it were, and announce publicly

that he himself was about to retire forever, was more than he could tolerate. With infinite cunning he thought out a scheme whereby he could thwart this elder nephew of his. After all he, Sir James Brooke, was the Raja. His word was law, and he was in a way omnipotent. There was another nephew, a young and somewhat priggish young man by the name of Charles Johnston—clever Charles, who had only a few months before changed his name over to Brooke. “Not for any special reason,” so he said, “but just because it was the family name and he liked it.”

After a violent quarrel with his elder nephew, Sir James Brooke definitely made up his mind that his younger nephew, Charles Brooke, should be his heir. He altered his will again, and then travelled home to England. Before he left he addressed the Malays and Dyaks in the Court House. Pock-marked and half-paralysed, he seemed at that moment to assume an almost godlike appearance. When he left the Court House, it was as if all the sunlight had gone with him, and the natives scattered silently to their homes knowing in their hearts that they were losing the greatest white man who had ever come their way.

And so Sir James Brooke, First Raja of Sarawak, travelled home to England for the last time. He seemed in a way content. He had succeeded in all his hopes, beyond even his dreams, for had he not once and forever restored the prestige of Sarawak.

He went alone to Burrator and buried himself within the four walls of his little home. His friends

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became anxious for him, imagining him brooding and depressed. They wrote to him urging him to visit London, and mix amongst the people whom he had at one time known so well.

“Why should not I enjoy the dregs which life has left in my cup?” he wrote in reply to one of them. “Why should that sentimental and sympathetic harpy society devote me to a routine which I dislike? . . . Have I not sacrificed taste, feeling, ease, and independence, in a vain pursuit after some substantial good to come out of a shadow? . . . Pleasant are country sights and sounds, in spite of rainy weather. I love retirement . . . I love mine easy-chair . . . I love my bed at half-past ten at night. . . . Now, how can society make amends for this loss? . . . Let her only promise to do so, and I will devote myself to the yawning chasm of finery and false pretence. . . . By my reckoning six hundred and sixty years have I been upon this earth. . . . I do not know exactly how . . . you must believe, but not enquire. Now, my dear boy, go to church twice every Sunday, because you owe it to society. Wear light duck trousers this cold weather, because society obliges. . . . Sit up late at night, eat, and drink too much. Listen to twaddle and praise it. Set up a tabernacle on the Mount of Fashion, bow down to it, and worship it. . . . Duty to society commands it. . . . But, do not ask yourself in your sober moments what society has ever done for you, that either you or I or anyone should bow down to it.”

On the morning of December 24th, 1867, Sir

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James Brooke was again stricken with paralysis. Miss Angela Burdett-Coutts and her friend and companion, Miss Brown, and Spenser St John, journeyed immediately to Burrator. They found the Raja almost beyond speech, but he could recognize his friends and they could see in the faded blue eyes that he was glad that they had come. The attack was a severe one, yet within the month he was down again in his own drawing-room. But a little later, whilst coughing violently, he had one more paralytic stroke and never regained consciousness. A few hours afterwards he was dead.

Twenty years he had reigned, and during that reign it had been one continuous struggle against adversity. He had fought pirates, he had, to the utmost of his ability, fulfilled an ideal. Afterwards they found written, in an old battered book, these words: "I once had a day-dream of advancing the Malayan race by enforcing order, and establishing self-government amongst them; and I dreamed, too, that my native country would derive the benefit of position, influence, and command, without the responsibility from which she shrinks . . . but the dream ended with the first waking reality, and I found how true it is, that nations are like men . . . that the young hope more than they fear, and that the old fear more than they hope. . . . I have at last awakened from my dream of extended usefulness."

Broken in mind, broken in body, and disfigured by the ravages of smallpox, this gallant English gentleman passed on to another world. He was

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buried under a yew tree in the churchyard of Sheepstor amongst the wilds of the western side of Dartmoor.

Such is the story of the little boy born in a suburb of Benares, a boy who began his life with a passion for adventure, and ended it on one of the finest pages of our history.

"I trust," he said before he ceased speaking forever, "I trust that I may be enabled to lay my head down on the pillow and say at the end that I have done SOMETHING."

And so Sir James Brooke, First Raja of Sarawak, died, and Charles Brooke reigned in his stead.



**CHARLES BROOKE**



## CHARLES BROOKE

CHARLES ANTHONI JOHNSTON BROOKE was born at Berrow, near Burnham, in Somerset, on June 3rd, 1829. He was the second son of the Reverend Francis Charles Johnston and Emma Frances Brooke, sister of James Brooke, the First Raja of Sarawak.

What kind of little boy he was I do not know ; but I rather imagine him taciturn and grim, shunning his school-fellows, and living remotely in corners of his own.

He was educated at Crewkerne Grammar School, and at the age of thirteen, imbued with the glamour of the sea and inspired by his uncle's adventurous example, he entered the Navy as a volunteer, and served under Willis Johnston, of the sloop *Wolverine*. Later he was transferred to the already famous *Dido*, and it was on this very ship that young Charles Brooke arrived in Sarawak for the first time.

He then rejoined the *Wolverine* for a while until he was again transferred. But this time it was as a Sub-Lieutenant he served in the *Maender*, under Captain Keppel. In 1848 he joined the *Vincent*, and a year later he became senior mate on board the *Terrible*. Three years after that he was promoted Lieutenant.

This early schooling upon the sea might well

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have widened the vision and the nature of this strangely composed young man; but instead of this it drove him deeper into himself, and into a kind of cold discipline and rigid uprightness that could not be disturbed. He was old beyond his years, and he did not care for the companionship of men. He learned in early life to depend upon himself. He was lean and angular, and unapproachable, spending many hours amongst dry books, dry documents, and Naval log-books and charts. He was a constant source of irritation to his uncle because of his prosaicness, and when they were together they were in reality so many leagues apart it was impossible for them to discuss any subject, or hold any sort of conversation. "My nephew is too serious for me," James Brooke would declare, with a twinkle in his eye. "Or else I am too frivolous for him."

Charles Brooke was not in the least bit afraid of his uncle; indeed, he was not afraid of anyone or anything upon earth. Maybe there was not much heart in him to beat. Maybe the blood in his veins was too cold and too clear. Maybe he was more man than human, this heir to one of the most romantic heritages in the world.

Charles Brooke joined the Sarawak Service when he was twenty-three years of age, and it was at this time that he changed his name from Johnston to Brooke, sensing that he might possibly inherit what James Brooke's eldest nephew could not hold. He was appointed to an out-station in Sarawak called Lundu, one of the loveliest and loneliest stations in

the land. A few native huts, glorious fruit trees, and an immense waterfall that tumbled between jungle trees. Those were his sole companions. The chattering of a language he could not understand, and the roar of the water from the hill, were the only sounds this young man carried in his ears. These simple Land Dyaks looked upon him with shyness and with fear. He had not the happy laughing ways they had become used to in his uncle. He was awkward and ill at ease. He could not assume his uncle's hearty manner, the ready shake of his hand, and the genuine affection he had for all these jungle tribes. He was hopelessly, pitifully English, and at every turn this inability to express himself would stand like a shadow in his way.

When he was thirty-seven years of age Charles Brooke published a book he had written called *Ten Years in Sarawak*. A dull, dry book, correct in every detail just as one would expect it to be if composed by such a man. You could almost visualize him as you read the lines of it. The stiff pen in the stiff hand, with the rigid mentality behind it. No human beings stepped out from between those pages, no varied voices echoed through the words. Only his voice stating coldly and calmly just what his cold blue eyes had seen. Prosaic and prim, he told what he had to tell, with the result that a true picture of those times, a colourful picture, was never really painted. Sarawak had been seen by this man, but not FELT, and although we could read about it, we could not properly understand it.

Charles Brooke became Raja of Sarawak on

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August 3rd, 1868, when he was thirty-eight years of age, and he found that he was called upon to rule an infinitely different State from that which James Brooke had entered upon, forty years before him. He found that a kind of paternal government had been built up on a solid and independent foundation. The population had increased, the people were content, and trusted in their ruler. Only inland, where the first Raja's influence had been less, troublesome tribes still existed, and Charles Brooke realized that it would take time and patience for law and order to be installed.

Before Charles Brooke came to the throne it had been his intention to suppress piracy forever, and he invited the opinions of all so that on his accession he would be enabled to promulgate a decree against the slightest ill-usage. The mere mention of the word "Slavery" to an Englishman such as he was, was sufficient to rouse his indignation. He knew that before the arrival of his gallant uncle in Sarawak pirates had taken yearly trips round the island, making midnight attacks upon peaceful villages, killing old men and children, and carrying away hundreds of miserable wretches to be sold into slavery in the Sulu Archipelago. He knew that in Sarawak there were tribes who sacrificed slaves in order to propitiate the evil spirits. For instance, to ensure good luck to a chief's new house, the first post of the house would be driven through the body of a young virgin. When they were inflicted by an epidemic it had been the custom to sacrifice a young girl by placing her in a canoe, and

allowing her to drift out to sea with the ebb tide. At the death of a chief, slaves had been tied to posts near the coffin of the deceased and starved to death in order that they should be ready to act as attendants on their masters in another world.

James Brooke had done everything in his power to suppress piracy. It had been a dream of his that had not quite been fulfilled. Inland he had succeeded in lessening the barbarities, so that by the time Charles Brooke succeeded, although slavery was tolerated by the Malays, it was in such a mild form that the word had become actually a misnomer. Some of the Malays had even been known to emancipate their slaves at their death, so that those who had been normally slaves were treated so generously by their masters that they would be happier and better off than they would have been had they been free.

Charles Brooke instituted laws whereby slaves were protected against the slightest ill-usage; not only that, they were granted civil rights and the privilege of freeing themselves by the paying of a very small amount.

Strange that two men so different should have had the same idea: to be the champion of the "Under-Dog." First James Brooke, with his love of simple people, and his great heart, and his dreams; and then Charles Brooke, with his stern sense of Duty, and what was fair and right, and infinitely British. Hard, thin-lipped and grim, he was his uncle's exact opposite. If you had searched the whole world over you could not have found

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two characters more different than they were. The first, so bluff and kindly, like the letting in of the strongest wind; and then this second Raja, reticent and severe, building a barrier round himself that only those who knew him well could penetrate. It was a question of two methods, that was all. One main idea, with two methods to control it. Where James Brooke had conquered by a ready laugh and by his gaiety, Charles Brooke had gained his way by the concealment of all emotion, and by the suppression of his very soul.

Sixteen months after Charles Brooke had been proclaimed Raja, he was publicly installed, and it did not take this man of iron long to set to work on the early troubles of his reign. James Brooke had not attempted to promote commercial and industrial development; he had been far too much involved in fighting the politicians at home, and the Head-Hunters out East. Charles Brooke came in upon a quieter time, and he immediately set out to encourage agriculture throughout the land. Agriculture and education were the two objectives he had set his mind on, thinking thereby to give the leisured people a pastime that would be both lucrative and helpful. But through everything he did, the great Brooke policy remained: "Sarawak belongs to the Malays, the Sea Dyaks, the Land Dyaks, and the Kayans and other Tribes . . . not to us. It is for them we labour . . . not for ourselves."

Eighteen years after Charles Brooke had been installed, a treaty was signed whereby Great



Britain acknowledged this man as the lawful ruler of the State of Sarawak, and furthermore it guaranteed the independence of the State to continue to be governed and administered by him and his successor under the protection of Great Britain.

I often think James Brooke must have turned in his grave to see these things happen so easily . . . the things that he had fought for so long. It had been James Brooke who had turned and churned up the soil for his nephew to tread more easily upon. It had been James Brooke who had created from barrenness and waste a perfect foundation for those who would come after him to build upon. It had been James Brooke who had discovered this strange heritage in this far-away island, where a white man could and would rule until the end of Time.

So often had this pioneer Raja dreamed of abolishing the slave traffic. So earnestly had he desired a satisfactory settlement with Great Britain; and only a few years after his nephew succeeded had his dreams come to pass. Charles Brooke did what he had to do, and did it well, without emotion and without the desire of reward. A purpose set in steel . . . an ice-bound dream accomplished and fulfilled for the sake of a native people, and for the sake of a great adventurer who lay in his simple grave under a yew tree in the churchyard of Sheepstor.

A year after Charles Brooke became the rightful Raja he visited England with the intention of getting married and founding a family for Sarawak. He was then forty years of age, and seventeen of

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those forty years had been spent in remote places of the jungle. Sarawak was his life, the very breath of his body. He was more native-minded than the natives, and the idea of being married did not by any means fit into the ordinary recesses of his mind. He could not have been described exactly as a Romeo of the East, neither was he the kind of man to attract an English woman; and yet he selected a young girl of about nineteen years of age. He was utterly incapable of any great demonstration of romance, and he had not, as his uncle had so often said of him, a pleasant sense of humour. Bleak and cold and calculating, he approached one of the loveliest girls of the time—a girl full to the brim of music and temperament, and the most infinite love of living. He approached her, at first, with diamonds from his principality, which he gallantly presented to her mother. I think it had been his uncle's intention that he should marry the mother in spite of the fact that she was his first cousin. She was wealthy and extremely influential, a far better match in every way than this beautiful daughter of hers. But Fate tumbled this fair-haired girl into the lap of Sarawak, and into the arms of a man who in his heart was hardly a human being.

Picture Charles Brooke on his way to find a bride. Frock-coated, tall-hatted and unbending, driving up to this country house at Warnford Place, Wiltshire. Picture him in the heart of the country in his black town clothes, and kid gloves on his hands. There, amidst the strains of one of Chopin's

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nocturnes, he very shyly placed upon the knees of this young girl a scrap of paper upon which he had written these few lines :

With a humble demean  
If the King were to pray  
That you'd be his Queen  
Would not you say NAY.

It was thus that Margaret Alice de Windt became engaged to this cast-iron ruler, and on October 28th, 1869, they were married at Highworth Church, near Warnford. Only a few people were present at the ceremony. Maybe it was that they could not bear to see this glorious, blue-eyed girl, with her soft warm temperament, on the arm of the stern and handsome man who was so much older than she was. No relations, not even Charles Brooke's father and mother, were there ; and so this ill-assorted couple drove away into new surroundings, and into a new world.

The story has been told of their first honeymoon dinner. When the waiter enquired what they would have to eat, the Raja replied irritably, "Dinner! Dinner! Quite unnecessary meal, dinner, and far too expensive." Then, seeing his young wife's startled and bewildered face, he added grudgingly : "Very well, then ; bring me grilled legs of chickens, and bread and butter and tea." "I don't care for elaborate food," he explained afterwards. "Inns are no good. We can always have some biscuits at any shop we want to. Much better and much cheaper." The biscuits he referred to were Captain's biscuits, and he ate them because

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he said that they reminded him of his many days in the Navy. They spent their honeymoon at Burrator, the small house in Devonshire that Sir James Brooke had purchased with such pride. This little house had been left to Charles Brooke by his uncle ; it stood upon a low hill, and was surrounded by smooth green lawns that sloped towards a shallow stream—a stream that rippled quietly over rocks and pebbles, singing as it went. It was the only sound in that lonesome spot, and I daresay it was more like the lonely out-station at Lundu, where Charles Brooke had first been stationed on his arrival in Sarawak.

The young Ranee's life was correct and stilted. He did not care for her to go out to dances because, he said, he would never allow another man's arms to be about her waist. He would not permit her to wear a low evening gown, because, he said, other men's eyes would then gaze upon her nakedness. It was not so much love as pride of ownership. She belonged to him, this lovely girl, and the sense of possession was strong within him. What was his he held to, and he was a law unto himself. He was jealous of Sarawak, jealous of his wife. Lacking in temperament, and lacking in charm, he would resent the easy way with which she could make friends. He wanted to make friends, but could not ; he was like a policeman with his hand held out to ward off the traffic. If there was anything deep in that heart of his, no living soul could ever reach it. I do not think there could have been anywhere upon earth a more lonely man.

I often try and imagine what Kuching must have been like when Charles Brooke took his wife there for the first time. Just a little village straggling along the mud-banks of the river ; maybe it had increased a house or two towards the sea. Just a few roads, and no places of amusement. The type of Englishmen who were out there at that time acting as government officers, were crude and ill-mannered, and would sit, so she has told me, with their feet on the dining-room table. They paid no attention to her, they did not even pay much attention to each other. Each felt that because he was in charge of some minute out-station Kampong (village), that he was a supreme being, *SOMEBODY*. And so, with new-born authority they lost the little manners they might once have had. Yet, what she may have missed in luxury she gained, I think, in romance. She saw a people entirely unspoilt, untouched by the lightest finger of English education. She saw the believers in omens, and the flights of birds. She saw the Sea Dyaks and Kayans, kind and cruel, easy-going and passionate. Life in Sarawak was just like a fantastic fairy-tale when she first set foot upon that fertile soil.

Charles Brooke was not expansive in his explanation of this country to the young girl who stood, all excited, upon the deck of his yacht *Heartsease*, and saw the Sarawak flag for the first time. He merely waved his hand as they turned the corners of the Sarawak river, and told her the various points of interest with pistol-shot exactness. "Monkeys . . . Sago . . . Trees . . . Crocodiles . . . Malay villages,"

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He might have been a machine, so lacking was he in the thrill of this experience. Who could have told that there burned within him only one love, only one thought, only one word—Sarawak? Who could have told that every branch of every tree along that river bank had twined itself about the iron heart of this strange and lonely Englishman?

The Astana or Palace was built in the form of three bungalows supported by stone pillars. The low, spreading roof gave shade, and the long verandah gave coolness to the rooms. A beautiful garden led down to the landing-stage, with grass lawns and winding paths, shaded by clumps of golden bamboo and lined at the river's edge with Nippa Palms. Crimson and orange cannas bloomed profusely, and orchids hung from the trees in pale and star-like streamers. At the back of the Astana the lawns disappeared into the jungle, and deep pools of stagnant water. Beyond the jungle the beautiful mountain of Matang faded into the blueness of the sky.

I imagine it must have been a lonely life at first for the young Ranee, with only a handful of crude Europeans to keep her company. Stiff tea parties, and dull unexciting conversations. Sometimes a musical evening during which the Raja would sing to his guests. Oh yes, he really believed that he could sing, and his cold and tuneless voice would jar upon the nerves of his wife who was so intensely musical and could have been, had she so willed it, one of the most famous pianists of her day. Melody to her was the very breath of life. She would sit

and play at her piano for hours at a time. But whenever there were people to dinner it was the Raja who would step forward and demand to sing, whether his guests wished him to do so or not.

A strange, ill-assorted pair were these two who ruled in this far-away land. Maybe the only thing they ever had in common was Sarawak. She also loved Sarawak, and she lived and suffered there with him gladly for the sake of the simple people who depended on her. She bore three children, a girl first, and two years afterwards twin boys. Three ill-fated children, whose destiny had been probably pre-arranged before they had come into the world. Two months before the twins were born there had been an eclipse of the sun—a token of ill-luck according to the natives. And sure enough, on her return journey to England the three children died of cholera, that dreaded scourge, near Aden. Cholera had been raging in Singapore as they passed through, but the natives believed that this was no ordinary event. The eclipse of the sun, the fact that the English nurse who looked after the children was cross-eyed, and the fact that the amah had stolen and brought on board with her some small idol, had, so they said, put a curse upon the Ranee and her family. Within one day they were ailing, and then died. Three little bodies were tied up in a sail, and lowered into the sea. The Ranee suddenly found herself with no heir to the throne of Sarawak, and married to a man to whom she had become estranged.

But Sarawak had to be served. Sarawak meant

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something more than just a broken romance. This great heritage had been given to them by the valour and the splendid attainment of a single man, who had discovered and conquered a country of his own. In 1874 a son was born, and Charles Brooke's mind was at rest. Two years later another son came into the world, and two years after that yet another son was there to safeguard the Sarawak throne. Whatever the Ranee's faults may have been, whatever mistakes she may have made, I think these three sons prove beyond all question that Sarawak was in her heart.

Many people have asked what Charles Brooke, Second Raja of Sarawak, made of his reign, and whether in any way it could compare with the splendid achievement of his uncle. Well, it was by no means so glamorous a reign. He was not the pioneer, the gallant adventurer, who with bullets and with steel put down one of the longest rebellions in the Far East. It was not an easy thing to step into this dead man's shoes. Inheritance has never been an enviable post for the one who has come after. Charles Brooke came in on a kind of dead end. Sarawak was in debt, trade was at a stand-still. The people expected so much from him, having had so much, and this unemotional man was to them like a grey veil that had been drawn across the colourful memory of Sir James Brooke.

And yet it was this second Raja who turned the little straggling capital, Kuching, into an almost model State. It was he who raised upon the mud-banks a balustrade of stone, and laid out the



minutest lawns, with a fountain, and some trees. Pure white offices were scattered throughout the town, and a great road wound its way throughout the marshes. Then came the Recreation Clubs, one for the men and another for the women. It was a strange environment for the young girl who had lived amongst the greatest celebrities of her time, to find herself transferred to this far-away land, where there were only a few women of her colour and her kind, and a handful of white men. Tennis-courts sprang up, a small golf course, a race course with a miniature grand-stand. Churches, Missions, Schools, and a Museum that has since turned out to be one of the most interesting museums in the Far East. In it he placed many kinds of curios and native articles from different districts; birds, butterflies and monkeys of all kinds; native bead work and weaving, showing the progression of fashion and of time. Maybe this museum is the only real record of the Sarawak of ancient times until today, and you will learn from the exhibits there much of these primitive people, and their way of thinking, living, and believing.

Charles Brooke strengthened his little army, and the police rose into an able-bodied force. White-robed priests paced the verandahs of their convents, and hooded nuns sat in the cloistered seclusion of their schools. Sarawak became possessed of a Bishop and an Archdeacon, whilst a Chinese choir trained their unaccustomed voices to sing our English hymns. They were taught to sing God save the King of England, and to bless the name of Brooke. The

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Union Jack and the Sarawak flag were so intermingled that the people sometimes wondered who this other Tuan Besar was, who seemed to stand side by side with their Raja. Into their confused minds there came gradually a knowledge that there was a country larger than their own, and that this other King who owned this other Flag was perhaps as great a ruler as their Raja. When all this was accomplished Charles Brooke looked round and about him for more work to do, and behold he found his capital all but complete. Yet, three of his greatest achievements were yet to be fulfilled . . . the Waterworks . . . the Railway . . . and the Wireless.

In the year 1884 there was a great fire in Kuching, and although this did not occasion such destruction as the Chinese insurrection, nevertheless the damage was extensive. In June, 1902, cholera broke out, spreading from up-country over the entire districts until at last it reached Kuching. It was this plague that made the Raja turn his attention to the water supply, and under the supervision of Mr E. L. Grove, the new waterworks were built.

Ten miles from the mountain of Matang there flowed the purest of streams, and all through Kuching little taps were placed where the natives could wash themselves, and drink, and carry fresh water to their homes. I think one of the prettiest sights in the world is to see the little children standing naked in the evenings having their bath beneath these taps, and the smaller ones sitting in the puddle that remains upon the dry grass. This water supply was a tremendous undertaking, but it has proved

itself worth while. Disease died down and epidemics became, in time, of the greatest rarity.

Charles Brooke then made a railway that ran ten miles into the interior, in the belief that one day a town might rise at the tenth mile. But owing to the fact that the railway led no further than to a dead end, only a few houses were built by the side of the line, and at each station a small community settled, consisting chiefly of grocers' shops and fruit stores.

This railway became one of the greatest features of Kuching, in spite of the fact that the carriages were narrow and upright, and the heat therein was at most times of the day unbearable. Groups of natives used to assemble to watch the morning and evening trains go by, with their first and second-class passengers sitting proudly but uncomfortably upon the wooden seats. Its shrill whistle would make you forget the palm trees for a while, and remind you of England with its troubles and trials. It was so unexpected, somehow, amongst the green stretches of entangled undergrowth. After all, it had not been so very long ago that Sir James Brooke had swum the river with a knife between his teeth and his little town had lain in ruins before his eyes. It made the people realize how the seeds that he had planted with such gallant hands had taken root and thrown out branches over the whole of Sarawak, so that Charles Brooke, his nephew, could build up his reign upon a fertile soil. If Sir James Brooke, First Raja of Sarawak, had been the founder, Charles Brooke (now Sir

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Charles) had taken full advantage of it, and his reign might well be called the Reign of Progress. Of course there was warfare in his time, and disturbances that occasioned expeditions, head-hunting, and bloodshed. But in a few years each district in the interior and elsewhere had its European officer in charge, and these disturbances grew less and less. Foremost amongst the rebels were the Dyaks of the Gat, and in 1915 there was an expedition against these people under a small force led by one of the junior Government officers, Mr G. M. Gifford. This expedition was entirely successful, the enemy losing nearly all their numbers, and more than half their boats.

Apart from this head-hunting, Sir Charles Brooke had little to contend with; so far as trade in the country was concerned he had not the least cause for anxiety. He framed no hard and fast rule about trade, but wisely allowed it to take its own free course as much as possible. The natives knew best where to find what they wanted on the sea and in the rivers, inland, and on the coast. He considered it unwise to leave all forms of trade free in the broadest sense, so certain taxes were imposed, taxes far lighter than in the surrounding governments. He believed, as his uncle had before him, that countries and a whole people could be so easily ruined by taxation and by the avarice of rulers. He knew that Sarawak was rich in minerals as yet concealed, but these were his people's riches, not his, and jealously he barred the gates against the hungry appetites of exploiters.

In this way, and in this way only, could he protect Sarawak ; by keeping his country in the background he could make headway in his policy. Progress he could not help ; it was the ogre that lay outside the gates, waiting with its huge and greedy jaws to swallow up his people. All over the country there grew little villages and towns, and each one had its offices and forts standing amongst it like white mushrooms on the bright green grass ; and each one, as I have said, required one or two Europeans to regulate and administer its affairs. It is to this little band of banished men that Sarawak owes so much ; their patience and vigilance and loyalty to the Raja has been unceasing ; their loneliness indescribable. Some districts were so large that several European officers could be together, and there were club-houses, and in some places even golf. But there were other stations where only one white man lived—stations where all seemed so beautiful on the surface, so smooth, and seemingly so pure. Yet, upon the earth where the white man trod minute insects were destroying this good earth. Tearing at life . . . clawing, and wriggling, and breaking it and him asunder.

Each resident had his Malay chief sitting in judgment with him, just as in the old days when Sir James Brooke first organized his Council. Rich and poor were treated alike ; Sir Charles Brooke believed in this for the good of trade as well as for the good of social welfare. Trust in every party was what he sought, because in trust only could the wheels of Government run smoothly. "Give us

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TRUST," he said to the people. "I need it for myself and for your trade. I and my Government are stationary, whereas your trade is movable and free. I form the trunk, you form the branches; you cannot properly thrive without me, or I without you."

The Raja endeavoured to encourage amongst his people the art of self-preservation. By this I mean the cultivation of every part of the land. But he found he was against their omens and their beliefs, and the many superstitions and fears that follow in the wake of planting. For instance, when you see a bright green patch in the midst of some jungle swamp, and are told that it is padi (rice), no one who has not lived amongst these people could possibly imagine the ritual that has to be gone through before this green patch appears.

First there has to be performed the Gawai Batu, or the Feast of Whetstones. This feast is held just before the clearing of the farm land commences. A blessing is asked upon the stones that they may make the instruments sharp for cutting down the jungle. The gods Pulang Gana, Ini Andan, and Manang Jaban are specially invoked in this feast. Pulang Gana is the god of the earth, and his habitation is in the subterraneous part of it. Ini Andan lives in the Heavens; she possesses all sorts of charms to bring about good luck. Manang Jaban, or Ini Manang has her abode at the gate of the Heavens; she also possesses various charms, not only for cures, but also for good luck.

A bad year of padi or time of famine is deemed

by the Dyaks to be a sign of displeasure of the gods towards mankind. This displeasure may arise from various sources, either because some persons have committed a great crime and gone unpunished, or some unfortunate maids have lost their honour, and sacrifice to the gods has not been duly offered.

Under these circumstances a meeting is held in order to decide about a feast to be given in honour of the gods to plead for pardon and to beseech their favour again. The preparations for this feast are immediately arranged, and the news announced to the neighbouring villages. The men go out fishing and hunting, and the women make the Tuak and pound rice. These preparations occupy them for a fortnight or perhaps a month. Then the day for the feast is fixed, and invitations are sent out to all the different villages.

When all the guests have arrived and have seated themselves, a live fowl is waved over their heads, and then the fowl is killed and the forehead of everyone is touched with blood. The drink is distributed and the cheers begin. But when the food is served, a sudden stillness falls upon the people, and it is in absolute silence that they eat.

After the meal is over an elderly man is asked to make the sacrifice and the offering to Pulang Gana, Ini Andan, and Manang Jaban. The man that is selected must himself be free from the stain of all adultery. He takes his position on the tanju (platform), just below the eaves of the roof; two or three mats are spread one above the other, and solemnly he sits upon them. Above him, home-

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made Pua Kumbu (blankets) are suspended like an awning, a wooden trough is put before him, and into it are placed the whetstones and a pig. The man takes a spear and pierces the heart of the pig, and the blood is made to run into the wooden trough to besmear the whetstones. After the sacrifice is over the man commences to make an offering of Pinang sireh, black pulut rice, barley cooked in leaves, smoked fish, eggs, sweet cakes, and smoked Keli. This offering is put into the wooden trough along with the whetstones. The man then invokes Pulang Gana, Raja Sua, Ini Andan, and Manang Jaban, beseeching them to look and behold, and to turn their faces towards them. He requests them to listen to their petitions, protect them, and to show favour to them.

After the invocation is over the wooden trough which contains the whetstones is moved into the centre of the covered Ruai (verandah), where the Pandong is to be erected. This Pandong is erected for the purpose of hanging the ceremonial basket, and in the basket a sacrifice which is placed upon a plate. A species of lily called Sengkenyang is also placed in the basket as a charm against bewitched persons, and a bamboo called Temiang and also porcupine quills are laid upon the top of it. This laden basket is supposed to represent a Bubu, or fish-trap, and it is hoped that Pulang Gana will place in it a charm for obtaining a good crop of padi. This charm generally takes the shape of a piece of stone, or a pig's tusk.

At dusk the men, who are engaged for a con-



sideration, begin to intone the incantation invoking Pulang Gana to come to the feast. Every Pandong in the house is gone round by the men, who intone the incantation in the choicest words they can find in all their poetry. Between four and five o'clock in the morning Pulang Gana and his train are supposed to arrive at the house. The musical instruments are immediately struck, and a procession is formed to give the party an honourable reception. An offering is brought and with it another live fowl is waved above for the propitiation. All the men sit in one row and the women in another. Pulang Gana and his son-in-law will sit with the men, and his wife and his daughter will sit with the women. It is most sincerely believed that the interview will have a good result. Pulang Gana's wife and daughter will grant to the women charms to enable them to be expert in weaving. Pulang Gana and his son-in-law will give to the men charms for obtaining padi. Such gifts are obliged to be recompensed, and therefore cups, plates, brass rings, and bracelets are offered to Pulang Gana and his family in the nature of a fee. At break of day Pulang Gana and his train return to their homes, and after their departure all the guests scatter and disperse. So ends the great Gawai Batu, or the Feast of the Whetstones.

In compliance with the traditions of their forefathers the preliminary ceremony of "Reaping the Padi" is strictly observed in order to avoid the displeasure of the gods, and to pay due respect to the padi itself. This ceremony takes place only

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when the moon is on the increase, because it is hoped that the padi will increase in quantity as the moon increases in size.

There is no feast given at this ceremony, but the procedure is for everybody to go to his farm the first thing in the morning, before breakfast, and to take a live fowl or an egg with him. When the farm is reached the ceremony can be performed in two ways, depending entirely on the wish of every individual person. I think the following description will elucidate it.

Immediately the farm is reached the person makes for the spot (Panggal Benih), where the padi seeds were placed during the sowing time. He binds up together seven padi stems (Langkai), and waves a live fowl or an egg over them. The fowl is then killed, or the egg is broken, and the blood is smeared on the ears. He puts the ears of padi in his basket, and then he returns home.

It is believed by the Dyaks that the padi has a soul. Any ceremony that is performed over it nourishes it, and enables it to live. It is also believed that if due respect is given to it, padi will always increase greatly in quantity.

The padi ears that are taken home are hung up in the house. Towards the end of the harvest, when the padi for planting is gathered, the seven ears that are hung up are mixed with it. If this ceremony of putting by padi is not strictly observed it is entirely owing to the negligence of the chief of the house, and it is his devout duty to assemble his followers, and remind them that the

harvest is over, and that the farming season will commence in three months' time from then. He, moreover, reminds them of the final duty of the padi in view of the traditions of their forefathers.

When the padi is diseased or attacked by bugs it is essential, according to the Dyak traditions, that some sort of ceremony should be performed in the farm to check further detrimental progress. This ceremony depends entirely on the state of the padi. When the padi is only slightly damaged an egg is taken to the farm, broken, and waved above, and a prayer is said to petition the spirits of the rats and bugs to quit the farm. Then the egg is buried, or left in the farm. The farm is pronounced taboo for the space of twenty-four hours. If the padi is more than slightly damaged, a fowl is killed in the farm and waved all about there. One wing is hung in the farm, and the rest of the carcase is taken home and eaten. The farm is pronounced taboo for the space of twenty-four hours.

When the damage to the padi is serious, a pig is taken to the farm and killed there. Its blood is smeared on the padi, and the carcase is thrown away. With the pig two offerings are presented, one to Pulang Gana and the other to the omen birds. The pig and the other offering which is for Pulang Gana are buried in the ground. The offering for the omen birds is placed on a raised platform about six or seven feet high. A prayer is said to petition the spirits of the rats and bugs to quit the farm. The farm is pronounced taboo for three days and three nights.

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When the damage done to the padi is not only universal, but continues to be very serious, the above ceremonies performed take no effect, and the rats and the bugs continue their destruction without cessation. A meeting is forthwith held to make a little ship equipped with its masts and sails and guns, in order to banish the destroying insects from the country. A few of each kind of the insects are shipped on board. Provisions such as chewing ingredients and utensils for cooking are given to them. An offering is also put on board accompanied by the usual live fowl. The ship is set adrift, and at the same time the following petition is rehearsed loudly and solemnly:

“Depart ye to Brune, to Santubong, to Limbang, to Sarawak, to Pontianak, to Danau, to Salimbau, to Bram, to Sandakan. Tarry not, neither must ye disperse. Be together and keep in your company. Return ye to the country of your fathers, your mothers, your grandfathers, and your grandmothers. We have given you an offering and provisions.”

After the ship is set adrift everybody returns home, and the road and the farm are pronounced taboo for seven days and seven nights. When the damage to the rice is not only very serious and universal but a severe famine is prophesied to be inevitable, a meeting is promptly convened to make the biggest propitiation to the gods. It is therefore essential to carve out of the earth on a selected spot, a male, a female, and a young crocodile. They are fenced round, and every family hangs a basket on the fence. The baskets hung are not to

be of one kind, but different in colour and design. After an offering is hung, pigs are killed, and every family takes a little of the blood, which is carried to the farm and smeared upon the padi. The road and the farm are pronounced taboo for the space of seven days and seven nights. The owners of the farm are bound by such restriction, and are not permitted on any account to quit their house. Purity is to be strictly respected, not only between the bachelors and the maidens, but also between the husbands and the wives. The husbands are not even allowed to sleep in the same rooms as their wives. The number of pigs that are killed for this ceremony varies from seven to eight. After the pigs are killed the Dyak war-cries are uttered, and a prayer is said to petition the alligators to consume all the destroying vermin, including the rats and the bugs.

After the expiration of the time fixed, very early in the morning, two Dyak chiefs, equipped and armed with spears and shields, set out to the locality where the supposed crocodiles are. They attack them from a distance, and at the same time yell out their war-cry for a signal that the road and the farm and the house are no longer taboo.

Sir Charles Brooke had little patience with all this superstitious ritual. "Stuff and nonsense," he would say; "can you see the farmers in England behaving like that?" I must confess it would be a little difficult to imagine an Englishman singing an incantation over the sowing and reaping of the corn.

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But Sir Charles Brooke persevered in the endeavour to teach his people to be self-supporting. It was almost impossible to make them believe that a time might come when padi would be scarce and the imports from Singapore might lessen. I think perhaps one of the greatest gifts this man possessed was his ability to foresee and sense the dangers that might beset Sarawak; and the older he grew, the stronger grew these fears, so that in his anxiety for the holding of the country he trusted nobody, not even his own sons. Of his eldest son he would often speak, and although he had had him trained in the Sarawak Service from the very beginning, he still did not altogether believe in his sincerity. "He is young and thoughtless," he would say. "And he cares for nothing but gambling and young girls. He is not really interested in the welfare of Sarawak, and I dare not trust him with the reins in his own hands."

It was only, in reality, a repetition of history. A turning-back of the pages in the life-story of Sir James Brooke. He, also, had not trusted his eldest nephew, and doubted his capability of being his successor. He, also, had believed that his policy would not be maintained. Inheritance is a grim and fearsome shadow that stalks at the heels of old age. Relationships are sometimes torn asunder by the reluctance of a father to loosen the grip of his fingers upon his own rights, and see them pass into the young and eager hands of an eldest son. Sir James Brooke had given up Sarawak only because his paralysed mind was no longer capable of

keeping it. Sir Charles Brooke stood upon Sarawak soil like an aged fox guarding his lair, baring his teeth even against his own son.

Those who were in constant contact with the Raja could not help feeling sorry for this fine old man whose reign was coming to an end. All that he had ever really cared for was Sarawak and her future. Covetous eyes were being turned upon the rubber plantations and the oil-fields and the wonderful little State, the people of which had been redeemed from the blackest horrors of barbarism by the life-work of Sir James Brooke and his nephew. The two White Rajas, each in his turn, had worked and lived for the good of these simple tribes. Unaided they had extended their rule, and brought peace and law and good government and prosperity to the land.

In one of the longest speeches he ever made at the eighteenth Council Negri, in the year 1915, the Raja said these words :

“I beg that you will listen to what I have to say, and that you will recollect my words, and endeavour to call them to mind to my Successor. I can only be responsible during this, my lifetime. I have lived in this country now for over sixty years, and for the greater part of that time as Raja. I know that I feel as you do in every way regarding the present and the future for the existence and welfare of the inhabitants. I think, after so long a period, you will allow me to open my mouth and give my opinion truthfully. Has it ever occurred to you that after my time out here others may appear with

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soft and smiling countenances, to deprive you of what is solemnly your right—and that is, the very land on which you live, the source of your income, the food even of your mouths? If this is once lost to you, no amount of money could recover it. That is why the cultivation of your own land by yourselves, or by those who live in the country, is important to you now. Cultivation by strangers, means by those who might carry the value of their products out of the country to enrich their shareholders. Such products should be realized by your own industries, and for your own benefits. Unless you follow this advice you will lose your birthright, which will be taken from you by strangers and speculators who will, in their turn, become masters and owners whilst you yourselves, you people of the soil, will be thrown aside and become nothing but coolies and outcasts of the island.”

Again and again he made manifest the fear that had grown in his heart. He put for the first time into public words the visions that haunted him. Visions of the spectres of enterprise laying siege to his beloved country. He could visualize demoniacal exploiters ravaging the soil, discovering its treasures, and monopolizing them. Yet the Malays themselves could not see it; they could not sense the menace that lay outside their gates. With soft and languid feet they walked trustfully through life, basking in the sunshine and sheltering from the rain. The Raja knew these people of his, he knew their entire lack of foresight, their entire trust until they were betrayed. Then the exceeding bitter cry,



the wail of anguish when it was too late. Would they never learn to guard themselves, to prepare, and to provide.

That was what Sir Charles Brooke endeavoured to do for them during his lifetime. His reign was not a glamorous but a guarded one. He did everything in his power to avoid the avarice of that ogre Civilization, that was treading and spreading its way throughout his country. He could see so many other countries being denuded by that so-called Progress. He could see so many other countries whose races seemed to have been changing hands. He could see them as they opened their gates to the vultures of speculation, and the effect these devouring oppressors had upon the natives. And the more he had seen of this, the more tightly he had held Sarawak between his hands.

The two men who knew him best and perhaps understood him most were the two men who worked nearest to him: Mr Bampfylde and Mr Deshon. To them he confided a little, but not much, of what was on his mind. Mostly he was alone. Alone bodily and mentally. His wife no longer lived with him, his sons only visited him at rare intervals, and then they seemed estranged. Alone he would pace the verandah of the Astana, reading snatches of Molière out loud as he moved, or humming some French song. He was extremely fond of French novels, and most of his diaries were written in that language. Strange disjointed love-affairs related in misquoted French, because, I think, he fancied himself more dashing with a

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foreign atmosphere about these friendships. Pen-pictures of amorous incidents covered the thin pages, incidents in which it was almost impossible to visualize this hard, unbending man. "I kissed her gently on the lips," he wrote in the kind of French that could not be repeated; and, strange to say, there was romance within this diary of a crude and clumsy kind.

Many strange tales have been told of Sir Charles Brooke, Second Raja of Sarawak, mostly amusing in their way. Tales that conveyed a little of what kind of a man he was. He never could resist a pretty woman, and I do not think he ever tried to. Even at the age of seventy, women attracted him, and in spite of his formidable character there seems to have been plenty of love in his life, and one or two illegitimate children.

He was brave, or rather he did not know the meaning of fear. He rode well, and when he was in England he would hunt as often as he could. He lived at Cicerly Hill House, in Gloucestershire, for a while, and hunted with the Vale of White Horse, of which Lord Bathurst was the Master. He was known all over Gloucestershire as the Grand Old Man, and almost to the end of his life he would still ride out with the hounds. "Everyone ought to hunt," he would say. "Clears the blood . . . keeps you young." But it was on account of this same hunting that he lost his eye. A branch cut across his face, inflammation set in, and then poisoning in his eye. The eye was removed, and I always think it was the unblinking coldness of the

artificial bead which he purchased from a cheap store that gave him the appearance of a cruel and ancient eagle, waiting to give the death-blow to his prey.

If a horse ran away with him and eventually landed him in the ditch, he would climb out cheerfully and say, "A little fresh this morning": that was all. He did not seem to feel pain or to sense fear. Lean and spartan and inhuman, he would just go sternly on his way.

And yet with it all he had a strange and, maybe, forbidding sense of humour. He was deaf, but more conveniently deaf than really so, and he would utilize this lack of hearing in order to avoid discussions with his Government officers. For instance, there was once a young Government officer on board the Raja's yacht, *Zahora*, with him, who desired, I think, to make himself important. They had been discussing Dyak troubles, and the right way to suppress them. As usual, the Raja had not spoken much, but the young officer had been eager to state what he considered the right and proper way to deal with interior trouble. He pointed to the Hotchkiss gun that was mounted on the stern of the yacht and said, "A few shots from that, Raja, would do those bl . . . y Dyaks good."

The Raja did not answer for a moment, and then he said with a bland smile, "So—your mother is still living in Plymouth, is she?"

Another time, when the Raja was stopping the night with one of the residents of an out-station and they were walking in the garden that sur-

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rounded the bungalow, the resident thought to himself that it would be an excellent opportunity to ask for a rise of salary. He did so. He did so several times. After a while the Raja stopped and, pointing with his stick to some of the flowers, said, "Beautiful flowers these. I have some just like them in the Astana garden."

No one ever knew whether he really heard or not; only now and again a twinkle would come into that single eye of his, denoting that even if he did not hear he could sense what it was they were saying.

There was a very famous case of a couple who had been caught misbehaving amongst some wood-blocks. When the case was tried, the Raja was called into Court to pronounce judgment. It was explained to him the extent of the immorality, what an extremely bad example it was, and would be likely to be to others. The Raja appeared to listen most attentively, and then at the end he said, "I don't care a damn about that; what I want to know is, what damage did they do to the wood."

There are a hundred and one such stories about this strange and unapproachable man. Stories that always make you feel that there was something there after all, if only he had been capable of bringing it out into the open. He had a dignity that was profound, and an immensity of power that was amazing. No wonder the Malays and the Dyaks looked upon him, even in his advancing years, as the very mainspring of the country. He

seemed to them to be a tradition as mysterious as a page of the Koran—this intangible old man who would sit upon an iron bench, with his diplomatic deafness and his artificial eye. Iron benches and hard wooden chairs decorated his rooms. Sofas, he said, were self-indulgent, and an arm-chair woman-like and weak. "Don't believe in fripperies," he would say. "Damned effeminate—never relax, and your stomach will stay where it is."

Gifted with enormous energy, he was hated and feared, flattered and cajoled, until he lost all sense of the outside world in this consoling cloak that covers the shoulders of most men who rule the destiny of others. There are many people who might ask what did Sir Charles Brooke make out of his heritage, and I think the answer would be this. He built upon the foundation-stone laid by his famous uncle an almost model State; he and the few Englishmen who had worked with him, and for him, fought gallantly against the adversity of debt and, putting their shoulders to the wheel, turned the great tide of events until Sarawak raised her head above these debts, and started free. "I must keep the collar on throughout my life," was his cry. "And really I could not in any way be happy without it. My whole body is made up in Sarawak."

Sir Charles Brooke overcame the difficulties of suppressing the many intertribal feuds that still existed amongst the thousands of warlike natives, and this was accomplished with a forbearance and a lack of bloodshed worthy of all praise. Mining, both coal

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and gold, began to flourish, and the oil-field at Miri promised to be one of the largest in the world. In the original concession granted by Sir Charles Brooke it stipulated that ten thousand tons of fuel should always be stored in readiness for supplying the ships of the Navy of Great Britain and her Colonies. The policy so faithfully followed by this man had always been the Government policy throughout—to allow the growth of the country to take place slowly and naturally. The Sarawak Government honestly endeavoured to help the people to govern themselves, and to assist them towards a general bettering of their conditions. The citizens of Sarawak had every privilege enjoyed by the citizens of England, as far as it was possible, and far more freedom than was known in most populated countries in the Far East.

I do not think Sarawak could have had a more faithful friend than Sir Charles Brooke, for he had made of it a desirable place in which to live, and an enviable place for all commercial development. It had emerged beneath his rule from a primitive country to the level of a model state. He had encouraged all its natural products, so that it had become one of the principal countries that supply the world. For instance, the sago palm grew to perfection in the marshes, and pepper—both black and white—was exported in large quantities. Gambier, in its finished state, produced a dye prepared from the leaves and young shoots of the plant; it rarely took less than two years to cultivate, after which, gathering every six months was



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necessary, even when the price of gambier was low. He encouraged large coconut estates, but for the most part the cultivation was in the hands of the Chinese, and a large number of small plantations were financed by them. The produce was over and above what was required for local consumption, and was exported in the form of copra. With the introduction of capital and extended cultivation, the output was increased, and the markets of Europe and America were ready to absorb them. And gradually into this apathetic race there was born a faint ambition to grow and to sell and to profit in the markets as best they could.

There was a certain root called Tuba which was the root of the climbing plant *Deuis Elliptica*, found in the innermost depths of the jungle. It was a wild, indigenous plant that had not until then been cultivated. It appeared to possess certain properties that were not only useful locally, but for exportation, for this root contained a powerful vegetable extract which, in Europe, was used in the manufacture of sheep and cattle-dip, and in China as an insecticide for their vegetable gardens.

The Dyaks used this tuba root for fishing. Large quantities of the root would be collected, and the Dyaks in their boats would proceed to the mouth of some small river with a bar of sand at its entrance, so that at low water it had little or no communication with the sea. When the roots had been distributed to all the boats present, they were beaten until the narcotic, which was of a milky-white colour, was extracted and collected in the bottom

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of the boats. At low water and at a given signal, all the boats would commence to bale out this extract into the river, and it would spread and spread throughout the stream. The fish, stupefied and stunned by the fumes of it, would soon rise gasping to the surface, and it was then that the wonderful part of this sport would commence. Fish of all sizes; immense fish and slim silver and red-gold smaller ones would struggle to free themselves from the lethargy occasioned by the tuba-infested water. As they would rise to the surface to breathe, the Dyaks with their spears would attack them. Cruel, you may say. But had you seen, and had you known, as I do, the chance these fish have to escape, and the difficulty there is in spearing them, I think you would change your minds in favour of the fish.

I know no greater thrill. Try to imagine for a moment a small and narrow boat; try to feel the sensation of balancing on the end of it with an immense spear in your hand. The fish rise for an instant only, and in that breathless moment you must strike—and strike true. Those that think it either unsporting or cruel should visit Sarawak and see how easy it is for the fish to escape, and how, in the evening, the tuba has cleared on the ebb tide, and nothing more remains of the poison in the stream.

In 1923 the Government of Sarawak, by the direction of the Raja, established a State Department in Trade. The intention of this Department was to encourage every branch of trade within the

State, both exports and imports, and to foster and facilitate, wherever possible, improvement in the supply and the quantity of the staple products of the country, particularly those of sago, pepper, and rubber—products for which Sarawak was renowned. This State Department was undoubtedly of the greatest benefit to all engaged in production, and to the country itself. Also it encouraged new industries for which the jungle offered an immense and undiscovered field.

The Forestry Department did everything in their power to interest the natives in their land. The fostering of new industries was a matter of absorbing interest, not only to Sir Charles Brooke but to the newly awakened natives themselves. The great forest tracks, so untouched and so unexplored, seemed to cry out to them and stretch out its arms to take them into the secret of its growth. Jelutong, or wild rubber; gutta-percha, extracted from the common swamps and the low ground of the country; rattan and bamboo for the construction of their houses, and the making of fishing traps, and for the carrying of their fruit and of their vegetables; the young leaves of the *Assam Paya*, and the bark of the *Temerantus*, used by the natives for making cloth, and the bark of the creeper *Kulit Jenang* for making string and nets for the Malay fishermen along the coast. Every leaf, every twig, every particle of jungle growth and undergrowth furnished produce of some kind. A wilderness of material, great and small, lay amidst the swamps of the interior. Even the thin lengths of fibre that

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ran along the underside of a certain leaf called Lamba was dissected, tied together, wound on a stick, and sold as thread for weaving a certain kind of cloth.

Dammar was classified as a resin and mixed with a wood oil; it was used by the natives for painting the seams of their boats. It was used mostly in Sarawak in the manufacture of varnish, and the Sarawak Dammar which passed through the hands of the exporters in Singapore was credited with being of the very purest quality, so light and transparent that it was in particular request for interior decorations for wallpaper, and coach and cabinet work; it was also invaluable for the varnishing of pictures.

Then there was the Illipe Nut—from the tree that only produced fruit once in every three or four years. From this nut a fine vegetable tallow oil was obtained. The natives became aware of the financial advantages to be obtained if they collected the nuts, and knowing when a crop was to be expected they would often leave the cultivation of their gardens for a while and go on expeditions to seek out this nut within the depths of the jungle. But often they were lazy and did not count the years between the fruiting. The value of trading had not at that time sufficient hold to make them realize that here was a produce that could have been enormously increased.

The Nippa Palm was easier to obtain, for it grew in abundance along the mud-banks of the rivers, and close to the coast. It differed from

other palms inasmuch as it had no trunk, being merely a collection of leaf-stems proceeding from a central stem. Its wonderful properties had been known to the natives for generations. It provided for those who were prepared to devote their time and their energy to its dissection, food for their families. It provided many of the articles in daily use in the household, and even some portion for the construction of the house itself. The heart of the palm-stem was eaten as a vegetable, the flower was made into a preserve, and when old was used instead of Betel Nut. From the sap of the stem of the flower or fruit, sugar was abstracted by a process of boiling, and from the froth of the boiling sugar, vinegar was obtained. When they burnt the old stems in a fire filtered with water, salt was produced. The leaf-shoots, being very strong, were employed for a dozen or more different articles of daily use. The mature leaf was used for making what they called Atap for the roofing of houses, as well as wrappers for packages of lime and of sago. The leaf-stem was sometimes used for flooring and for rafters, whilst the leaf-ribs were frequently used in the place of string. Even the husks of the fruit had a useful purpose, for after having been scraped, the fibre was made into brushes. In case of emergency the timber was used for the making of rafts and of native fireplaces. The skin inside of the leaf-stem was used extensively for making boat balers. When the natives found the palm floating in the river and in a rotten condition, it was dried, pounded into a fine powder, and this

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powder was used for the treatment of wounds and was said to be extremely efficacious.

So, you see, in one palm there was an entire co-operative store. There was no need to run hither and thither in the construction of a house, or its requirements. There in the jungle they could find their primitive needs, and from the leaves and from the stems and from every particle of this particular palm, the very sustenance of life exuded.

Then there were the vegetable oils produced from the fruit and the kernel of several trees, with the exception of the oil extracted from the coconut. There were edible birds' nests of a species of swift, whose nests were built in caves in upper Sarawak. These nests had little commercial value except amongst the wealthiest classes of Chinese for their soup. This delicacy has never appealed much to Europeans in England, but in Sarawak we consider it as one of our most favoured dishes.

There were alcoholic materials, the principal one being Ragi, used as a substitute for yeast. This was made up in the form of a thin biscuit, and sold in the Bazaar for a very small sum. Tuak Tampui was produced from the inside of fruits that were left to ferment, and to which a little honey would be added. Arak Noh was a drink of which the Land Dyaks were particularly fond. It was made from the sap of the flower stalk of the *noh* palm. Arak Jelu was made from the juices of the sugar-cane. These drinks were very sweet and very potent, and as you squatted upon the floor sipping them, you did not realize that when you attempted to

rise, your legs would double under you and you would be unable to go home. Your head would remain most alarmingly clear, with the result that many a man has been deceived by this and has fallen by the wayside. The hospitality of the Dyaks was a fearsome thing on an evening of incantations and of song.

Various minerals would give employment to many of the natives, and prove a source of income to the State. Gold appeared in the form of fine sand in the alluvial deposits and in the gravel of the rivers. Antimony had been found in the limestone districts, in clay boulders, and in rocks upon the surface of the ground. There was evidence that at one time there had been tin, nickel, quicksilver, and many diamonds. The famous "Star of Sarawak," the whereabouts of which is now unknown, was discovered many many years ago, and was pawned by the Ranee in order to gain money for the education of her sons, at a time when Sarawak was most heavily steeped in debt.

The Gold Mine was put into motion by the Borneo Company in 1898, and in 1921 it had run its course, and what had once been a hum of modern machinery became an idle thing, unwanted and unwatched. This gold mine was situated in what is now looked upon in Sarawak as one of the loveliest stations in the country. Jungle trees mounted upon high rocks, and rolling downwards towards a little lake. A few bungalows dotted upon the sides of the hill, and a small island like a sponge dropped into the centre of the water.

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The tale has been told that a pure white crocodile was found in the lake at Bau, but it was never caught, and I feel sure that if there had been such an animal, some expert crocodile-catcher would have hurried forth and trapped it.

One of my greatest pleasures used to be in visiting Bau when the mines were at work, and watching the liquid gold running from out of the flaming furnaces, and listening to the crashing of the machinery, with its mighty wheels turning these bare rocks and mountains into revenue. In order to reach the mines we were obliged to ride in little trollies run upon a narrow railway line, and pushed along by Chinese coolies with bamboo poles.

The coal mines belonged to the Government, and the oil-fields to the Anglo-Saxon Company at that time. This oil-field at Miri was at certain times of the year almost inaccessible, owing to the bar that ran between the harbour and the sea; so the famous pipe-line was laid which enabled ships to be loaded with oil as they anchored out at sea.

Sir Charles Brooke helped in the development and in the cultivation of the jungle swamps until he gradually instilled into these picturesque and idle people a little knowledge of what their country could be worth. He had, however, many things to contend against. Their omens and beliefs and their strange superstitions, that made them plant only at certain times, and reap when the omens were good, and build their farms at the call of a certain bird. So much time was wasted in waiting



for these spirits to manifest themselves, so much patience in allowing them to cease their work and venture into the jungle to satisfy their gods. They in their turn have taught the white man simplicity of living; they have taught him remoteness, and a disregard of all physical discomfort.

Sir Charles Brooke ignored the thought of pain, and snapped his fingers in the face of danger. He listened to no one, nor would he receive advice. He was not particularly well educated, neither was he a naturally clever man. In judgment he made errors, in discussion he was hasty and impatient. Doggedly he would stand to his own convictions whether they were right or wrong, and defend them to the end.

There was an island in Sarawak he would make frequent visits to, called Talang-Talang Island, which was the principal place for the turtles to lay their eggs. During the South-West Monsoon, that is to say from June to September, sometimes over a hundred turtles would crawl up on to the island to lay their eggs on the thick sand. They had only a hundred acres of sand to make their nests in, and round and about them there were immense rocks and jagged stones. These turtles would emerge out of the sea at about seven o'clock in the evening, and would commence to dig large holes in which later they would lay their eggs. So they would go on working, this black mass upon the pale gold sands until six o'clock in the morning, when they would return once more to the sea. Turtles' eggs are a great delicacy in Sarawak, eaten raw, and

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sucked out of their shells. To my mind they are the most horrible form of food I have ever tasted, and leave a kind of trail of sand down your throat.

In the last years of his reign Sir Charles Brooke brought Wireless to Sarawak. I can remember so well how we watched it grow. It seemed almost to be a race between the snapping of the threads of this old man's life and the iron structure that was being raised. Would they complete it in time for him to see it? Everyone knew with what reluctance he had submitted to having this modern monster reared up upon his land. For he was a man who had not in any way tolerated modern invention; he had never once been known to use a telephone, or set foot inside a car. The Railway had been about as far as his mind would progress. Once having given way, however, he became as eager as the rest of his Government. But the building of it was slow, and age with its cruel insistence would not wait. To the natives the Wireless was a kind of monument to this mysterious and ancient man. Half of them did not even understand what it was for. They thought it was a ladder from which they would be enabled to see Europe and the ruler with the Union Jack who reigned there. They would bring their families and their children and their children's children from far up-river to stand before it in open-mouthed amazement. For many weeks it became more patronized than the Museum; the talk of it was on every tongue and in every language. "Have you seen the Wireless?" they would ask one another,

which, when you come to think of it, was an exceedingly foolish question, considering the top of it could be seen for miles and miles around the country. But what they would mean by "seeing" was in reality "touching," and they would not be content until they had stood beneath it, and laid their reverent fingers on the iron rungs.

I was in Kuching when a certain Chinese climbed the unfinished Wireless mast that stretched like an iron ladder to the stars. It was said that he wanted to place a curse upon some man before he died. Up and up he climbed, his bent legs aching, and his bent arms clinging to the rails. After a while he reached a kind of platform, and he crawled upon the platform and lay there upon his face.

In the meantime he had been seen, and a crowd had collected below. They shouted to him, but the sound that reached him was no louder to the Chinese than the cry of a flying fox. Besides, I doubt if he had been listening at that moment, so obsessed he must have been with this one idea, this one thought, to curse a man he hated before he died. He had seemingly passed from all human aid into a fanatical dream, for he rose on to his knees and began to sing. His song was a kind of cruel incantation against the man he bore so ill a grudge, and when it was over he waited on his knees with his arms outstretched.

When he stood on the edge to drop, the whole crowd shrank back from the iron structure, and one or two of the women screamed. Then the small bent figure came whirling and curling

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through the air like a falling leaf, to crash headlong into the soft earth.

When they went to lift him up they found that he had sunk far into the ground, almost to his waist. Some of the natives said that it was an evil omen for the Wireless, others agreed that it was merely the working of a crazy mind. No tragedy has happened since, and the Wireless mast has stood there many years; but every time I pass it by I remember the little Chinese and his strange suicide.

I mention this tale, and the fact that the natives were in awe of this new structure, in order to convey how even at that time they had remained entirely unspoilt. They were still just dreamers, these tillers of the soil, these fisher-folk and children of the jungle, living their lives in the same way that their parents had lived their lives before them. Year after year Sir Charles Brooke had brought them—unwillingly to himself and unwillingly to them—nearer and nearer to the civilization he so dreaded. He had been obliged to show them that there was perhaps more in the world than sowing seeds and casting nets. The schools had taught them mathematics, shorthand, and science. They had learned that they could make more money in the cities than on the soil. The value of money began to dawn upon them, and the ways and means of making that money by cunning rather than by agriculture. Alone the races that had remained with their old laws and their old traditions were the Dyaks and the Kayans and their kindred tribes, and far away up-country in the dark depths of the

interior there were still the Long Houses where you could go and see wondrous things, and hear the legends of an unclothed tribe.

As soon as the Wireless was installed the Raja seemed to weaken and decline. It was almost as if he had forced himself to live because of it. Yet no one, even then, could or would believe that he was really ill, and he went to and fro from his office in the morning, and out riding in the evening. Then one day he fell from his horse and was carried unconscious into a little bungalow near by. But even then he would not give way. "A little giddiness, that is all," he said when he came to; but the Malays noticed with a sinking heart that he did not ride again.

He took to sitting about, and would give little parties and dinner entertainments. There was an extremely undesirable ceremony called "Band Day," when once a week everyone would dress up in their best clothes and congregate round the Raja upon a stretch of grass where the band would play classical music, or would respectfully listen to the discordant sounds issuing from the Filipino Band, which, fortunately for him, he was unable to hear. "Ah," he would say, tapping his stick upon the ground, "Mozart . . . very lovely": although the actual melody they had been playing at the moment was by Chopin. But none of them dared contradict him, and even if they had he would not have listened.

His "Favourites" would sit on either side of him; they were, as a rule, the prettiest women amongst that strangely assorted crowd. No one dared leave

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until the band had laboured through its programme, which was printed and lay crumpled up in their laps. Some of the men would try to creep away, but one look from that small and snake-like eye would draw them back again. As the Sarawak Anthem was being played and everyone stood to attention, a sigh of satisfaction would ripple through that exhausted crowd as they thought of the club and their first drink.

The Raja would also entertain, and I will try and describe a Sarawak reception as it was in the days of Sir Charles Brooke. He would invite the whole of the Kuching community—that is, the European community—to dinner. He did not invite them because he was in the least anxious to see them, but because it was one of his duties as Ruler of a State to be officially polite to its inhabitants. Even before they arrived the guests would know that they were not really wanted, and it had to be admitted that he would make little effort to alter this conjecture. Everyone would stand awkwardly about him, and the Malay boys would move with swift and silent feet, offering drinks and cigarettes. The Raja would receive his reluctant and trembling visitors—who filed unsmilingly up the stairs towards him—with a snarl that was meant to be a gracious expression of welcome. There would be a little small talk on the verandah before dinner, and once more the Raja's "Favourites" would flutter to his side like chiffon butterflies, and in shrill voices and trills of unnatural laughter endeavour to convey to those who were not in his favour what a wonderful

time they were having. The men were divided from the women like sheep from the goats. There was no real need for them to be so divided, but this was their way; they were trying to show the Raja that his policy was being upheld, and that contact with white women was not only an error in judgment but a weakness of the flesh that would not be recognized in the Sarawak Service.

During dinner tongues would be loosened a little, owing to the aid of many bottles of champagne. After dinner coffee, liqueurs, and cigars were placed on the verandah outside. There was no electric light in those days, and the Astana was lit by hurricane lamps that blew out every time the sea breeze sprang up, and plunged the room in darkness. The moment the hurricane lamps were lit, enormous bats would circle about the ceiling, and huge beetles would go smacking against the bare arms of the ladies. Then, quite suddenly, in the midst of some conversation, the Raja would rise to his feet and, moving to the head of the stairs, would stand there with his hand held out stiffly to bid his trembling guests farewell. I have never seen a host enforce departure on his guests before, but the hand held out was the most definite indication that his party was over for the night.

Sarawak would take its moods from its Raja. If he was gay, then they were gay. If he was quiet, then they were steeped in silence. They would watch and they would wait, and they would hang upon his humour. It was a one-man's country, this Sarawak in the sun.

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I remember the old Raja so well when he gave his last address, in the dining-hall of the Astana. It was a speech to a Malay school, to which I happened to be presenting the prizes. The Datus sat round, their hands on their knees, and upon their faces a remote absorption. A scattering of Europeans were placed in a stiff row upon the stiffest of chairs. In the room were lines of little Malay boys in snow-white suits and red-velvet caps, and before these boys, close to a little table, stood the Raja. His body was so transparent you could almost see through him. He was practically deaf, and only had one eye; and yet, although it is impossible to explain to you the reason, he filled that room and made it seem as if there was no one in it but himself. He was at that time eighty-seven years of age.

To the people of Sarawak he was a gigantic institution, a religion almost, and they could not and would not believe that he would ever be taken from them.

But for many months this Grand Old Man had been suffering from the illness that had gradually worn him down. His heart—that cold, stern heart of his—had been slowly wearing out in the frail body. It had started with a swollen ankle. “Damned nonsense—and a touch of gout,” he had called it, but the swelling had spread from his ankle to his leg, and remained there, so that those round and about him knew that at last the end was in sight.

He first became really ill at the Astana, and his



eldest son—the son he had never really believed in—had stayed with him and looked after him alone. It must have been a weird experience in that vast Palace. The sick old man and the young one, side by side, and across the river the whole town waiting for the signal of the flag being lowered on the Palace tower. Sometimes, when it was thought that he had died, he would rise from his bed and repace the verandah he had trodden on so often, dragging his blanket in a crumpled mass behind him. He would mutter broken words in French and in Malay—a jumble of memories passing before the failing mind.

During the Raja's illness daily prayers had been offered up in the Mosque by the Datu Imaum, Tuan Belal, and Tuan Khalib, on behalf of the Mohammedan community; and amazing to relate, the old man rallied and so far recovered that he was able to travel home to England.

The Datu Imaum celebrated this occasion by giving a thanksgiving feast at the Mosque, to which several hundred people were invited.

This trip back to England was a wonderful accomplishment for a man nearly ninety years of age. But he was like a tree that had embedded its roots so deep into the earth, it could not fall. The Malays all said of him that he was so tenacious of life that he was everlasting and eternal, and would be with them forever and all time.

But Sir Charles Brooke, Second Raja of Sarawak, died on May 17th, 1917, at Chesterton House, Cirencester. It was like the mighty crashing of a

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jungle tree, and then a quivering silence. Almost as if the whole country had drawn breath to ask these questions, "What will our new Raja be to us—Vyner Brooke the enigma, the happy-go-lucky man with a laugh for everyone. How will he rule? What will be his policy? For the third generation will the Brooke policy be upheld?"

Sir Charles Brooke was buried under the yew tree in the little churchyard of Sheepstor, side by side with Sir James Brooke, his uncle. An impressive memorial service was held at St Paul's, at which His Majesty the King was represented. This service was conducted by Bishop Montgomery, D.D. And the band of the Honourable Artillery Company played Chopin's Funeral March, as well as the Sarawak National Anthem.

It had not been easy for this man to follow in the adventurous footsteps of the first Raja. The task of competing with those earlier pages of romantic history had been a hard one. But in no uncertain way Sir Charles Brooke had carved out his own career, and made himself a sort of Hoodoo in the minds of the natives. He had made himself stand out in Sarawak history as an original and arresting figure, whose personality would live forever in the minds of those who served him.

Every head was turned towards the new ruler, every heart was beating anxiously, and every mind filled with unrest, as Vyner Brooke, Third Raja of Sarawak, stepped upon the throne.

VYNER BROOKE



## VYNER BROOKE

CHARLES VYNER DE WINDT BROOKE was born in Albemarle Street on September 26th, 1874. When he was two years old the Ranee took him on his first voyage to Sarawak, where his brother, Bertram, or Adeh as he was known, was born.

Amongst the many paintings of Sarawak, in Kew Gardens, by Miss Marianne North, there is a sketch of the little Raja Muda in a white frock and a broad blue sash, playing beneath a tree in the Astana garden, with his native amah in attendance. The picture shows that he was a very fair and square little boy, and rather small for his age. When he was twelve years old he once more visited Sarawak, accompanied by both his brothers, Adeh and Harry, and when he was seventeen he paid his third visit, after which he did not go out East again until some six years later.

Vyner Brooke's childhood was indeed a strange one, ruled over by a stern, almost inhuman father, and a fond and over-indulgent mother. His parents' lives together were stormy and divided. Constant quarrels and reconciliations, poverty, and a struggle to keep up the prestige of Sarawak, made the home life of these three little boys entirely devoid of harmony and peace. The Raja practised the most strict economy, and he never provided his

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sons with any clothes. When Vyner Brooke was young he was obliged to wear all his father's old suits cut down for him, and his father's elastic-sided Jemima boots, one foot of which was larger than the other. I often think that it was this larger elastic-sided boot that gave him the habit of standing on one foot which he has to this day.

The Raja would not allow any of his sons to eat jam, because he said it was effeminate. He even went so far as to sew up all their pockets, as he said it was ill-mannered for them to stand with their hands in them. He insisted that his sons should ride, and would stand in the centre of a field with an enormous whip, just to put some "life," as he would call it, into the horses as they cantered round. Vyner, being the eldest, was deputed to try and "break in" his father's untrained hunters. Those were the days he dreaded most, when the untrained hunters were had out.

I can picture those three little boys so easily, with their hearts in their mouths, clinging desperately to the saddles, whilst somewhere from the garden an agitated mother would be watching and waiting for these drastic riding-lessons to come to an end without disaster.

Vyner Brooke was educated at Winchester and Cambridge. His home life during those early days, as I have said before, was of the simplest. Sarawak was steeped in debt, and he did not know that it was at that time that his mother was obliged to pawn the famous diamond, the Star of Sarawak, in order to pay for the education of her sons.

There were three things he remembered always as delighting him. One was being allotted the task of painting the number on the front door of their little house near Addison Bridge; another was going into the gallery of a theatre and spitting on the heads of the rich people below; and the last—by no means least—of these delights was when, twice a week only, in case the fearsome joy of it should wane, he was allowed to go down to Earl's Court station and see the trains draw up and disgorge their motley crowd of passengers; or to go and see some express rush by like a steaming monster, emitting wild shrieks, and with sparks flying from its funnel, whilst he would stand on tip-toe upon the top of a little bridge, so that it would seem as if this monster was tearing between his legs.

The three little boys were delicate, especially Vyner, who suffered considerably and continually from ear trouble. Harry was a white-faced, anxious child, with a double-jointed toe that would make a noise like a clock ticking whenever he walked. Adeh, at about the age of fifteen, suffered from a delicacy of the bones and had several severe operations. For many months he was obliged to go about in a bathchair, and at Folkestone everyone grew to know the charming-faced boy, who would be drawn into the sun, and sit and play upon the flute so beautifully that crowds would gather round to hear him. One day, when he had been placed by the window, he attempted to practise rifle-shooting, and to his horror shot his nurse through the arm as she was gathering flowers for him.

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They were the greatest of friends, these three brothers, and fought for one another through thick and thin. One boy's burden became the other boy's burden, and one boy's battle was the battle of all three. They happened to be at a preparatory school at a time when bullying was rampant, and roasting was one of the relaxation pastimes. Roasting consisted of holding a boy closely over the fire with his trousers pulled so tightly round him that it would seem as if his body was actually on fire. They would fire peanuts into Vyner Brooke's open mouth, and would box his ears if they knew that he had an abscess in one of them until the abscess would burst and the blood would flow. From preparatory school he went to Winchester, and during his time there his little brother Harry arrived for his first term. Harry was a pathetic, untidy-looking boy, whose boot-laces were always undone, and whose nose was always bleeding. Vyner Brooke protected this minute brother of his, and would not allow him to be touched. But Winchester was not like the private school, where they had been so bullied, and where Vyner Brooke had suffered so many indignities. All the boys were happy at Winchester, and free, without the torturing knowledge of those early days. From Winchester, Vyner Brooke went to Cambridge. A few years later, as he was leaving, his second brother Adeh arrived, to become a well-known figure there and win his Blue.

I think I am right in saying that the heir to Sarawak was one of the most popular men at



Cambridge in his time. He joined in any escapade ; I have visited Cambridge since and been to his College, where I was shown with pride the glass window that commemorated his time there. I was shown the little staircase with the marks in it, made, so they told me, by Raja Brooke, as he was called, and his friends, as they made their perilous and uncertain way to bed. It was Vyner Brooke who drove a coach down the middle of Cambridge High Street, and it was Vyner Brooke who was mixed up in a street fight with some navvies and, strong as he was at that time, was knocked senseless into the street.

One Sunday he was deputed to read the Lessons in Chapel. Chapel was, as a rule, half empty, but when the news went round that Raja Brooke was to read the Lessons, it was packed from floor to ceiling. A murmur of laughter was audible all through the reading, and he was reprimanded afterwards for a flippancy he had been very far from feeling.

During vacations he went to Switzerland and became enthralled by mountain climbing. He ascended the famous Taeschhorn, which was in reality a creditable feat, considering he had never attempted mountain climbing before. He also went up the Matterhorn, and several smaller peaks.

On an allowance of three hundred a year he once kept a book at Cambridge for the Cesarewitch. All the men backed an outsider called Victor Wild, which won at twenty to one. Vyner Brooke was three years paying off the debts he owed on that race, his father refusing to help him out of what

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he considered an unnecessary and extremely foolish escapade.

At the age of seventeen, on his third visit to Sarawak, Vyner Brooke was publicly proclaimed heir apparent. When he was twenty-three he was taken straight from the glamour of Cambridge life and plunged into a little out-station in the interior of Sarawak, called Simanggang. There, with only one other European as companion, he began his life's work, just as a newly joined cadet would do on joining the Sarawak Service; that is to say, he acted as a kind of clerk, sticking stamps on other people's letters and sorting documents he had not even written. Later he was raised to the dignity of doling out castor oil to the natives, and vaccinating Dyak babies; many a time he was present at the delivery of their young. It is not difficult to imagine how bewildered he must have been when he first settled down amongst these people whose language he could not understand or speak, and what a contrast it must have been to one who had led a somewhat hectic and uproarious college life. The other European with him was not of much use to him; he would sometimes drink more than was good for him; even when sober he was apt to be surly, uncommunicative, and hard. The young man was a godsend to the elder one, whose brain was sapped by the climate and good living. Not only would the senior ask his assistant to do his work for him, but he would insist on his shaving him in the mornings, because his own shaking hand would cut his chin severely.

Over and over again I have been told of the experiences of Vyner Brooke at that time, and there are two stories that seem to stand out from all the others ; stories of two operations he was forced to perform that, incredible as they may seem, are nevertheless quite true.

He was living in a lonely little Fort perched upon grass slopes. The hill at the back was covered with jungle trees, and below the Fort there was a little stream that ran into the main river. All round and about there were nothing but Dyak houses ; the only occupants of the Fort were himself and his superior officer. One morning Vyner Brooke was sent for in a hurry to go across river to a far-away Dyak long-house, where a man lay mortally wounded by an "Amok." It is fairly generally known what an "Amok" is, but in case there are some who do not realize what it means, I will describe it. An "Amok" is a form of brain storm that may come to a perfectly normal person, and induce him to run through the streets, ripping up with his kris anyone he may happen to meet with, ripping them up from belly to throat. This Dyak was scarcely alive by the time Vyner Brooke reached him, and to his horror he saw that the man's entrails were lying in a heap beside him. Now he was young in those days, and by no means experienced in medicine, and I do not suppose that ever in his life had he imagined that he would see a man's inside ripped clean out of his body and hanging by a few blood-streaked threads. For a moment his courage failed him, and then he

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reckoned that to try and do something for the man would be better than leaving him there to die; and so, rolling up his shirt sleeves, and amidst a crowd of awe-struck and admiring Dyak warriors, he commenced his task. Fold by fold he placed the entrails back into the man, and with as clean a needle as he could find, managed to sew him up. Then they all waited breathlessly for the man to recover consciousness. "And do you know," said Vyner Brooke with that humorous twinkle of his, "everything was perfectly all right except that when the Dyak began to speak, his voice came out of his navel."

The other occasion was at a place called Oya, where he was again summoned to perform the very same operation. Once again he managed to fit everything back into what he considered the proper compartment; only this time when he sewed the man up, and stood back to admire his handy-work, he noticed that he had left a little bit of the entrail sticking out from between the stitches by mistake.

"But what did you do?" I asked him. "What could you do? You surely did not cut him open again?"

"Oh no," he replied. "I just cut off the bit with a pair of scissors—it looked so damned untidy."

It may seem strange that this young man was left so much alone when he first went out to Sarawak, but although the old Raja's school was a hard one, there was justice in it, and wisdom, and an immense foresight. He realized what an advantage

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it would be for this son of his to be fully equipped with a knowledge of all the little things that might so easily have passed him by, when in the fullness of time he should come into his great heritage.

Vyner Brooke was resident of the Batang Lupar District from 1898 until 1899. He then became a Member of the Supreme Council.

He had his full share of warfare when he was twenty-six years of age. On May 3rd, whilst he was Raja Muda, he went on an expedition against the Muruts of Trusan. Now the leader of these Murut rebels was one Okong, who for many years had been hostile to the Sarawak Government and had done to death many inhabitants of the interior. He was a dangerous and unscrupulous chief who kept those who were more peacefully disposed from earning an honest and upright livelihood, levying a form of blackmail on the unfortunate people who endeavoured to trade there. His territory was up the Trusan river, which flowed between the Limbang and Lawas streams, about six days above the Fort. Okong's strength in numbers consisted of fifteen houses, and the expeditionary force against him numbered only eight hundred men. This force was under the command of Mr O. F. Ricketts, the then resident of Limbang. The expedition was a hard one. It necessitated long marches over the most mountainous passes. But most of all it was a strain upon the young Raja Muda, who had not been in the country for more than three years. The bad state of the paths, the steepness of the hills, and the almost

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impenetrable swamps, made progress difficult and slow. Warfare in Sarawak was not as an ordinary open war might be; it was a kind of cat-and-mouse proceeding, in which men stalked their prey for many days, and then springing suddenly, would find them gone. It was a test of patience and endurance in a country where the crackling of a leaf was like a pistol shot upon the weakened nerves of men. It meant unlimited high spirits, and the calling up of all that was noblest and best in human nature. As a rule these weeks and weeks of marching would end up all in vain. Either the party would have to turn back owing to illness and disease, or else, when at last they would reach their destination, they would find the Long Houses deserted and the property removed.

Eventually by the aid of search-parties, and after small and sundry attacks in which Vyner Brooke marched forth as conqueror, "Cronjee," as they had nicknamed Mr Ricketts, and his party reached the enemy's village only to find that Okong himself was not there. All that remained of that mighty rebel were his possessions and his house. Six Long Houses were burned down amidst the triumphant war-cries of the expeditionary force, and most of Okong's property was looted. Then once more the weary march home, the heat, the mosquitoes, and the enervating climb. Mr Ricketts reported to the Raja that the expedition had exceeded all expectations, and that the whole party had kept up their spirits throughout it all and to the end. This, in itself, might sound a trivial thing, but in the East,

where every movement is a torment, it meant much in the characters of men.

Two years after this there came what was known as the Cholera Expedition ; a happening full of gruesome horror, a kind of nightmare that might haunt the dreams of youth but never be conceived as a reality. Yet it was real enough to Vyner Brooke and to those others who took part in it, and it remained vivid in their memories, and as a shadow in their lives.

The Raja Muda was at that time resident of Muka, and on June 9th, 1902, the old Raja issued the order for a certain expedition to attack the Ulu Ai Dyaks at the mouth of the Delok river, for a series of raids on neighbouring tribes. This expedition was to be led by the Raja Muda, his son, and Mr Deshon, then resident of Kuching. The party were to assemble at Simanggang, the little out-station that Vyner Brooke had first worked in. During the only night they slept there, two men died suddenly and mysteriously beneath the bedroom of his bungalow. Vyner Brooke reported the next morning to his father that he thought the two men had died of cholera, but the old Raja pretended not to hear, he pretended not to listen. "Nonsense," he said, "the expedition must go on."

I think this incident proves more than any other what an unscrupulous and inhuman man this second Raja of Sarawak was. Everybody warned him that cholera had broken out, and always he refused to listen or take heed. He had made a plan, and he would stand by that plan to the end. He insisted

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that his orders should be carried out in every detail. In spite of the fact that three of his children had been destroyed by this dread disease, without a tremor he sent his eldest son to an almost certain death. Did he believe that it was really cholera? Was he in reality so cruel and so crazy that he could send one of his own blood into a trap that he himself had set? Who can tell? Sir Charles Brooke, Second Raja of Sarawak, did not tolerate interference, he would not take advice. Maybe he was so sure that others were wrong where he was right. Maybe he really believed that it was not cholera at all. Maybe he wanted to show to his people that he would not show favour to his own son. Knowing him as I did, and the strange, cruel pride of him, I can quite easily imagine him with his back against the wall, saying over and over again to himself, "The expedition goes—because I, the Raja, have commanded."

So the expedition started forth with this scourge of cholera in its midst.

Several men died as they went up-river, died suddenly and horribly; yet the fear of an actual epidemic had not then spread beyond what was in the young Raja Muda's mind. Then things suddenly became so bad that they were obliged to turn and make their painful and laborious way back to where they had come from. Out of a force of ten thousand men, two thousand died of cholera. In a few hours the country that had been so beautiful became distorted and disfigured by little mounds of dead, lying in the beaten grass. When they died





H H the Ranees and the wives of the Datus



Sarawak police prepared for an expedition



A Dyak family

SARAWAK SCENES



they fell in huddled and grotesque positions. Boats floated down with limp limbs hanging in the water. Bodies rose from newly dug graves and came to life if only for a moment. The whole atmosphere was one of torture and of pain. And through it all, Vyner Brooke and this little band of Englishmen kept up their courage and their spirits, although they could see in one another's eyes the look as if they were asking one another, "Will it be your turn next—or mine?" They never even remotely imagined that any of them would return alive. The natives squatted round them in mute appeal until they in their turn were stricken, when they would hold themselves tightly with claw-like hands and roll, screaming, down the grass slopes into the swiftly flowing stream below.

As they made their way back to Simanggang, there was little noise but the splash of the dead bodies as they threw them overboard. Some of the men, believed to be beyond help, returned after a few days, having been washed up to the land. Others, who had been but lightly buried, revived and fought their way into the open air. And all the time hundreds and thousands of flies droned from the dead to the living, spreading the scourge and filling the unwholesome space.

At Simanggang more and yet more died. It seemed at one time as if these Englishmen would be the only three left. There was no medicine, nothing with which to help, only a dresser called Sengene who worked with untiring energy and courage to give all the relief that was possible.

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What an expedition for a young man not long from Cambridge. What a memory to carry with him through the remainder of his life. Although only two men in his own boat died, by the time Vyner Brooke reached Simanggang he could have walked for miles upon dead bodies. These bodies were eventually piled up in heaps and burned, and he has often described to me how, when he went from the Bazaar to his bungalow in the evenings, he would come upon these ghastly mounds waiting for the fire to consume them. The atmosphere was sickening and terrible, and there was no stirring of the wind to carry it away. The news of this tragic expedition reached England, and one evening paper more venturesome than the rest went so far as to announce that the Raja Muda had died of this disease; they even published a picture of his swollen body floating down the stream. You can imagine what effect this report had upon the Ranee, who so many years before had seen her entire family swept from before her eyes by the same evil plague.

The epidemic spread eventually over the whole of Sarawak, reaching as far even as Kuching, but the amazing part of the thing was, that through it all not one single European died.

I have often wondered what were the feelings of Sir Charles Brooke who, because he would not be thwarted and because he had refused to be advised, allowed this thing to be. Willingly and with his mind open to the fact that a possible plague of cholera had started, he had impatiently swept aside

precaution, and without visualizing what it would mean if a scourge of this kind was allowed to spread throughout his country, had ordered the expedition to proceed, and had even gone so far as to send his eldest son, his heir, the young man on whom he and his people so much depended. When told of the consequences of his orders that the expedition should go on, he made no comment; stiff and upright he sat, tapping his stick upon the floor, and no one, not even the men who knew him best, dared approach him.

A year later Vyner Brooke was made resident of the Third Division, and in 1904 he organized a successful expedition against the Dyaks of the Upper Rejang river. After this he was promoted to share the duties of the old Raja and to make his principal residence in Kuching. The third and last engagement he took part in was the Bong Kap encounter at Kanowt, in 1904. I mention this because amongst the many boats that were captured, there was the famous war boat called *Bong Kap*, capable of accommodating one hundred Dyak paddlers. This war boat was one of the largest in Sarawak at that time. But the expedition was disappointing and uneventful. Banting, the chief rebel of the Ulu Ai, ran away, and Kana, the Dyak chief, although shot through the hand and in several places in his body, managed to escape. The Raja Muda lived for a week at the mouth of the Mujok, hoping that the enemy would return, but except for occasional skirmishes there was no sign of the rebel force. They had retreated into the

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vast interior of Miki Pambar, where men can see and not be seen, and can live without being detected, within the shadows of the jungle trees.

You can see a little, from these engagements, why it was that head-hunting and tribal disputes had taken so long to suppress. The area of country to traverse was enormous. The natives knew every inch of the land where concealment was so easy for them. The rivers and little side streams led in and out of the jungle like a maze. All these things made warfare difficult and prolonged. But it has been accomplished, and today most of the enemy tribes have come in, and peace-making ceremonies have taken place throughout Sarawak. Only the patience and perseverance of these Three Rajas has made this possible, and only by kindness have the Dyaks been taught that there are other ways of showing courage, and other ways of winning a wife, than the barbaric and fantastic fashion of taking your neighbour's head.

In the year 1910, between the months of January and February, Vyner Brooke was taken desperately ill. He had been out fishing most of one night in an open boat, and had got soaked through and through with rain. At first it was hoped and believed that he had merely contracted a severe chill, but it soon became apparent that it was something far more serious. After being ill at the Astana, it was thought advisable to move him to the Singapore Hospital, where he was operated on for an abscess on the liver. Barely recovered from this, he was again operated on for another abscess, and a little later

on yet again. For three months he lay between life and death, suffering agony from the slow healing wounds, in the blindless, fanless rooms. Singapore Hospital was not then as it is today. It was primitive and ill-equipped, and only the excellent care and attention he received from his nurses, and his own courage and wonderful constitution, carried him through. But he was never quite the same again. A certain delicacy remained with him always, and the splendid health that had been his as an undergraduate at Cambridge, had gone from him forever.

In 1911, Vyner Brooke, Raja Muda of Sarawak, and I, were married at St Peter's Church, Cranbourne, on a bleak morning in February, amidst a Guard of Honour of Boy Scouts and a throng of excited and interested villagers. After an eight years' romance, during which we had attempted to elope and our families had become estranged, we broke down the barriers of opposition. It was only a very simple wedding, and very pretty and countrified, and amidst a shower of pale rose petals we started forth upon our honeymoon. A year later our first daughter, Leonora, was born. The old Raja was in Sarawak at the time, preparing all sorts of ceremonies in honour of what he was so sure would be a grandson. Bell-ringers were waiting to peal forth their joyous clang as soon as the news was given to them that an heir had been born. Maybe it was those bell-ringers, and the thought of the old Raja waiting impatiently and grimly for his wish to be fulfilled, that stag-

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nated the male issue to such an extent that three daughters were born and never a son, and the succession to the Raj remained—and remains to this day—in the hands of the Tuan Muda and his son. Vyner Brooke went back to Sarawak in 1912, and the whole population turned out to see this man, whom they had begun to look upon as a confirmed bachelor, arrive in Kuching with his bride.

I think my first visit to Sarawak made me realize, for the first time, what the animals in the Zoo must feel like as the people stand outside the bars of their cages and gaze in on them. I was, in a way, apart from them all. I did not seem to belong to the country or to them. I felt inconspicuous, colourless, and dull, and of course incredibly self-conscious. I cared then what people thought of me, and wanted them to like me, but only because my husband was so beloved by everyone and I did not want to spoil it.

Kuching was a very different town to the little straggling village that the Ranee Margaret had first set foot in. Only the Astana remained, with the decoration that Sir Charles Brooke had conceived. It was unbelievable in its medley of disappointing beauty. The shell of it was lovely; it was like a lovely cloak upon the shoulders of an ugly woman. The white walls with the grey tower growing from them; the huge high rooms that stretched themselves a whole length of the building—everything lent itself towards the making of a perfect home. But it was what was in those rooms that made this royal residence such a travesty. Sir Charles Brooke,



instead of having Eastern furniture, had filled his Palace with appalling imitations of every period in English and French history. Cheap gilt stood side by side with poor mahogany. Early Victorian sofas stood stiffly by the walls. Crude Dresden figures held caskets in their broken china fingers, and meretricious mirrors were dotted about upon thin-legged tables of no particular period at all. It was so hideous, the inside of this house that should have been so beautiful. From the verandah, on one side, the most perfect view anyone could possibly imagine. A stretch of green lawn edged by sealing-wax palms whose scarlet stems were outlined against the sky, and then a broad brown river, with the small town dotted unevenly along the opposite bank. On the other side of the Astana, the garden sloped into the distance, with beds of crimson cannas and roses, and purple bougainvillæa spread out upon the trees. Travellers' palms stood against the sky like open fans, and the smell of a million blossoms hung in the air like a drug.

So often when I am in London, seated amongst sophistication and smartness, I can look back upon this lovely garden and can feel strongly within me the urge to escape from the crowded atmosphere, and return once more to the scented softness of the East. Amidst the crash and swing of an English orchestra I can suddenly hear the full-throated note of a Dyak gong. Amidst the purchased perfumes I can trace the sweet scent of the *Chimpaka Mulia* blossom, and through the chatter

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of a so-called civilized race I can quite suddenly hear the long-drawn war-cry of some Dyak chief.

It was about this time that the storm I have already mentioned began to gather between the old Raja and his son, and Vyner Brooke found himself suspected and doubted by the man he had served so loyally and so well. At first it was but a rumour, whispered words in the Bazaar, and secret looks amongst the Government officers. There was an atmosphere of uneasiness throughout Kuching ; both the Raja Muda and myself could feel it oozing into the happiness we might have had. But it was not until the Proclamation was issued that anyone realized the full extent of the shadow that hung about our heads.

This Proclamation read as follows :

I, Charles Brooke, Raja of Sarawak, do hereby decree that my second son, Bertram Brooke, heir presumptive to the Raj of Sarawak, in the event of my eldest son, Charles Vyner Brooke, Raja Muda of Sarawak, failing to have male issue, shall be received on his arrival in the State of Sarawak, with a Royal Salute, and Honours equivalent to his rank. I further decree that he shall be recognized in future by all the inhabitants of Sarawak as being a part of the Government of the State, and that such recognition shall be duly registered in the records of the Supreme Council of the Raj of Sarawak.

I do not think Vyner Brooke would have resented this so deeply had his father told him of it before-

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hand. But he knew nothing of it ; he did not even know that his brother and his wife were at that time on their way out to Sarawak. It had all been arranged in secrecy, kept from him and his own wife. The Proclamation had landed like a bomb-shell in the midst of what he had thought until then was a time of contentment and of peace. He read in every line of that State document treachery and deceit. Emotions run high in Eastern countries, and this heir to the throne of Sarawak could not see anything more in the Proclamation than a direct indication of his own father's distrust in him, and a definite assumption that he was incapable of bringing into the world a future heir.

His first letter to his father was both careful and controlled, but it stated firmly his disapproval of the Proclamation. The old Raja immediately replied :

*June 8th, 1912.*

MY DEAR VYNER,—I am surprised at your letter, and there is only one word to explain it, "jealousy." I can't stop you from determining your course in the future. What I have proposed is only for your good and that of Sarawak, and I now enclose the minutes I was going to bring into Council about this matter. That HE is part of the Government means that he is an officer recognized and appointed by me . . . and his duty is to support and protect the Raj of Sarawak.

I wrote your mother this morning how glad I was that you had accepted Adeh's new position.

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I am going to see the Datus tomorrow instead of giving them the Proclamation which will be distributed amongst the population on Monday. Please return the minutes as soon as you can.—  
Your affectionate father, C. BROOKE.

This was the rough draft of the minutes of the Supreme Council held on or about June 8th, 1912 :

His Highness the Raja this day convened the Supreme Council and laid before the members the following minutes for their consideration, and the final passing will be deferred for one week or more. In which time they will have the opportunity of making enquiry of the principals in the population what their opinions may be in the matter which he considered to be of great importance to the country. The Raja stated that he had already issued a Proclamation in which he had announced that his second son, the Tuan Muda, should be received with royal honours on his arrival. He wished now to lay before the Council, a Bill explaining that in consequence of the present prosperity of the country, so very different to what it had been when he first entered it about sixty years ago, when it was heavily in debt, and had been kept up with the greatest difficulty. Since then, by slow and sure steps, it had gradually risen to its present state and was worth several millions instead of hundreds as before. So long as it was poor there was no fear of any individuals,

Companies, or Governments seeking to obtain power or profit from it. But now there was considerable danger in this respect. Therefore, it was his intention to set up a barrier kota to avoid if possible this event from taking place. The kota (fortress) would support his successor, the Raja Muda would strengthen his position and authority and relieve him from a considerable amount of responsibility in case of any communications being made by those who desired greedily to encroach on the wealth of his country. Cases that might possibly be proposed after his death, such as transfer, purchase, or aggression. Such matters arising could, and should be referred to the Sarawak State. The Trust Committee would be composed of His Highness the Tuan Muda, Charles Bampfylde, Harry Deshon, and Mr Charles Johnson, Legal Adviser . . . and the fifth would be the retired treasurer, who could have a seat as Honorary Member during his furloughs in England. They would be placed on small salaries, and the principal duties would be in the hands of the Legal Adviser. He would now attempt to state and limit the duties and powers of this committee as follows:

- 1st. To receive and check and supervise the revenue reports from the Treasurer, and if the members were of the opinion there were undue extravagances, and land too much disposed of to companies otherwise than natives of the country, and not hitherto in accordance with the usage and principle of the Raj, that in such

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cases the members would have the right to remonstrate with the head of the State.

2nd. That certain deposits of revenue over and above what was required for the working of the State should be held and invested, and the members of the committee should either partly or legally become the trustees of this investment. To ensure salaries and pensions being paid in case of accidents or unseen occurrences arising.

3rd. That the Sarawak State Trust Committee should be reported to the British Government, and that they should have the right to communicate or to negotiate if needed, and that no transfer or sale of the country would be allowed, unless under absolute necessity such as revolution or unsafety to life and to property. And the Sarawak State Trust Committee sitting in England would have the best means of judging the wisest course to be pursued in case of such extremities.

4th. The Raja clearly stated that so far as the Interior administration and policy in the Governing process, that the above-mentioned committee would not have the power to interfere. And that this must be entirely left in the hands of the Raja and those serving him in Sarawak. Such matters secondary, such as choosing or selecting cadets, or superintending stores required . . . instructions would have to be sent from Sarawak for such requirements. His Highness concluded that his desire was that the late Raja's will, dated April 15th, 1867, should continue

to hold good in the appointment of heirs to the Raja, and he hoped that his son and successor would be guided in his acts in the main by his father's long experience in the country and among the inhabitants, as he himself had in the main followed in the footsteps of his uncle, the First Raja of Sarawak.

His Highness then addressed the Council, informing them that he would appoint a committee of gentlemen, say four, to give him their advice and opinion as to the best manner of arranging the Trust Fund. Whether the interest should be paid into the treasury for their distribution of pensions and salaries, or whether it was to accumulate and add to the reserve. Deposits after being lodged in the hands of the Sarawak Trust Committee were not to be touched again, but the interest and how it was to be paid, was the point for consideration, and this he thought should not be in the jurisdiction of those unacquainted in financial concerns.

The indignation and fury of the Raja Muda was unbounded ; it seemed to him that he could not have been treated with more humiliating shame. It seemed as if his father had been endeavouring to say to his people, "I am not sure what this son of mine will do ; we can none of us be sure ; better tie his hands now, before it is too late." Yet through it all he kept his wonderful sense of humour. Letters were rushed to and fro, between him and the offices across the river, and he would watch

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their progress through a pair of the strongest field glasses, and see the effect these letters would have, and what a stir there would be round the offices, like angry bees whose swarm had been suddenly destroyed.

To his father's letter accusing him of jealousy, he answered as follows :

I have received your letter and I may say at once that there is no truth in your suggestion that jealousy is the reason of my attitude in this matter. I merely consider it my duty to protect my own rights and those of my wife and of my children, and this new arrangement secretly prepared behind my back, and only announced at the last moment, utterly destroys those rights. Your explanation this morning, if it can be called an explanation, gave me no indication of the grave importance of the step you propose to take. I have considered carefully the document you have sent me, and am unable to give my consent or approval either to it or to the Proclamation you propose to make on Monday. On the contrary, I adhere entirely to what I said in my last letter, and if you choose to persist in giving my brother Royal Honours on arrival, and on issuing the Proclamation, and on proposing this new Bill, I shall be reluctantly obliged to make a public protest against your action, and on leaving this country until things are more satisfactorily arranged. The position you propose to put me in must inevitably degrade me



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in the eyes of the population, and amounts to admitting that you do not consider me fit to govern this country without the sanctions and approval of my younger brother. This is a position which I decline to hold. I hope to hear from you by return that all these proposals, including the reception, will be reconsidered.

Never in his life before had this formidable old man received such an epistle. He had ruled with an iron will, he had trampled on and destroyed men's feelings to satisfy his own, living only in his own way and administering laws and orders without a single argument or protest from his staff. That this son of his should now stand in his way, oppose him, and almost threaten him, was far more than he could stand, or understand.

DEAR VYNER [he wrote], your second letter I have received repeating your disobedience. Unless these letters are withdrawn, I shall have to take the matter up officially.—Yours sincerely,  
C. BROOKE.

And then again he wrote a little later on :

The question is obedience or disobedience. Loyalty to me as Raja which hitherto you have never disputed, or disloyalty . . . as your letter reiterates your disobedience to my commands, I hereby officially inform you that in consequence of these acts, I give notice that I shall not in future require your service in the Government Offices nor in the Supreme Council.

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I regret that I feel myself obliged to take up this matter in this way, but obedience to the Raja has heretofore been the rule, and WILL be so long as I am RULER.

As you will now have no more duties to perform in this country, I recommend your leaving as soon as convenient.—I am, sir, Yours faithfully,  
C. BROOKE, *Raja*.

Enclosed with the official letter there was a private letter as well, written in his own handwriting :

*June 10th, 1912.*  
KUCHING.

CHESTERTON HOUSE,  
CIRENCESTER.

DEAR VYNER,—At the same time as sending my official, I may tell you that I had intended this to be my last visit to the East, and being doubtful if I should be able to conduct affairs of State satisfactorily with you, I had almost decided that I would resign with a few conditions—and leave it to you to hold the Raj. With your present title till after my death—the conditions would be that I should continue to have power over the treasury and that the concessions in my name—Brooketon and Panduruan—are not to be disturbed without my sanction. My retirement would be, of course, reported to the British Government and I should be clear of responsibility in future. Whether the interior will be safely managed or not will then depend on you. I shall go up on my coast trip to bid good-bye to all friends, old and new. I only wish

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you success in the future. The reception of Akeh will be as the Proclamation sets forth.—  
Yours faithfully, C. BROOKE.

What I should recommend you to do would be to travel, and the transfer of Raj could take place after my return in September. I have no ambition for myself personally—and only consideration is for the safety of the future. I came into power after the late Raja's death under very different circumstances, forty-four years ago.

The Raja Muda's reply to his father was as follows :

I have received your letters and I am making preparations to leave for England tomorrow morning. I regret that you should view my action in this matter as disobedience. I assure you it has been with deep regret that I felt it my duty to oppose your policy on this occasion, but I could not, and cannot give my consent to a scheme which so compromises my future. We shall remain in England until things are on a more satisfactory footing.

This alarming correspondence between father and son shook Sarawak to its foundations. Such a thing had never occurred before in the annals of its history. It must not be thought for one moment that the Tuan Muda was in any way connected with this scheme, or that his journey to Sarawak was a secret one. The Tuan Muda believed that

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his brother had been informed of everything, and that it was in full agreement on all sides that he and his wife had been sent for.

Vyner Brooke's younger brother was, and always has been and always will be, one of the most loyal and upright upholders of the Raj. All his life he has worked quietly and inconspicuously behind his brother, demanding nothing, and seeking no self-praise. He, also, has loved Sarawak, and he has lived in it, and learned much of its rule. There could not be found anywhere a simpler or more kindly man than he is, and he knew nothing of the storm that awaited him on those far-off shores, nor of the disapproval of his brother. He knew nothing of the fact that this Proclamation was only the culminating point of the old Raja's obvious mistrust in his eldest son, and his lack of faith in his integrity. Little hints had been continually dropped. Was not the Raja Muda of too frivolous a disposition to rule a country of that size? Would he take his position seriously enough? Who could be quite sure of this young man with the kind blue eyes and the merry laugh? What lay behind that careless good humour of his, and was his warm-hearted cordiality a menace—or was it really meant?

All these doubts had helped to bring about the Proclamation. The old Raja reckoned that two heads were better than one, and that the Tuan Muda was a man to be relied on. But Vyner Brooke could not, at that time, see it in the same light. He left a letter for his brother to receive on

his arrival. He explained that he had left Sarawak owing to reasons that had made it impossible for him to remain. He was uncertain as to what part his brother had played in the formation of this State Committee in London, over which he had been made the President. "I am to do the dirty work out here," he wrote furiously, "whilst you and your gang are to say what I am to do and what I am not to do. . . . No, thank you." And then he added at the end of it all: "I do not return to Sarawak again unless with full power. By full power I mean, absolute control over the country."

I can so easily imagine the bewildered expression of the Tuan Muda as he perused this infuriated and inflammable epistle. I can so easily see him passing his hand over his head, a trick that he had, and the funny hurt look in his eyes. Anyone more innocent of duplicity or envy than he was could not have been found. Never had he at any time wished to be in his brother's shoes, and never had he at any time assumed a position other than that of a faithful friendship. He would not have accepted a position on any committee had he not thought that it was with the full co-operation of the Raja Muda.

Yet out of all this evil there came good, for those two brothers grew to know and understand one another, and whatever doubts they may have had were quieted and put away forever. On landing in Sarawak the Tuan Muda found that his brother had gone, that a storm was raging over Kuching the like of which had never been raised over the

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head of the old Raja before. The Tuan Muda found himself proclaimed and heralded as the Heir Presumptive, whilst the Raja Muda's letter of protest lay crumpled in his hand.

It was not really the fault of this fine old man whose reign was coming to an end; it was only that he could not and would not recognize the fact that his sons were as loyal to Sarawak as he was. He was afraid the great Brooke tradition would be broken. "Sarawak belongs to the Malays, the Sea Dyaks, the Land Dyaks, and the Kayans and other Tribes; not to us. It is for them we labour; not ourselves."

He was eighty-three at the time this Supreme Council was formed, and the only thing left in his life that he cared for was Sarawak. The mistake he made was in not giving credit to his eldest son, not giving him the benefit of the doubt, but making him a prisoner within the walls of his own Government, and placing the key of the prison gates in his second son's steady hands.

The Council consisted of four Englishmen and five Malays—Mr Caldecot, Mr Dallas, Mr Douglas, and Mr Baring Gould on the English side; the Datu Bandar, the Datu Temonggong, the Datu Emaum, the Datu Hakim, and the Tua Kampong Gresik on the Malay. The old Raja in his address to them said that he had the pleasure of introducing to the Council his second son, the Tuan Muda, who had been received with a Royal Salute and a Guard of Honour. He had directed these honours to be paid to the Tuan Muda, not only because he

was entitled to them personally, but also because he felt convinced that by his son being recognized in his position in Sarawak, he would be able in future to be a much greater source of strength to the Raj, and especially to him and his successor. It could only be by suspicious minds that the idea could be entertained that the Tuan Muda's recognition was for any other purpose than that stated by him. His, the Tuan Muda's, action would be principally if not entirely devoted to the interests of the State in England and in Europe, and not in the East except by the express wish of his successor; namely, His Highness the Raja Muda. He said that he could not prevent false reports, but it was not his intention to listen to them, or to allow them in any way to divert him from his path of duty, which was the safety of the Raj and people of his country after his own life was over. He added that he felt confident that all the true friends and well-wishers of the Raj and the country would be of his own opinion, and ready to support him if and when he needed.

Very soon after this Council had been formed the old Raja left for England, and when he reached Cirencester I myself wrote to him and asked him to forgive and to forget, and to be friends again with his son. I assured him that no harm had been really meant, and that the whole incident had been an unfortunate and unhappy one. He replied at once to my letter :

MY DEAR SYLVIA,—Since your letter of this morning received in bed, let all pass like a passing

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cloud in the tropics which is so shortly succeeded by a gleam of sunshine. Not a fig of feeling of vindictiveness ever has been or will be harboured by me towards you or anyone, I do assure you, and I sincerely hope that this clearing of the atmosphere may be extended towards Vyner's mother and Adeh. Bygones will be bygones. Sarawak has not been founded on antipathies. I shall be quite well in a few days, and hope you and Vyner will shortly come to Chesterton.—  
Yours very affect., C. A. BROOKE.

And so it was that peace was once more restored in the Brooke dynasty, and the only cloud that had ever fallen between the brothers was scattered and cleared forever out of their lives.

Very soon after this there came the Great War, and the only way in which Sarawak was affected by it was in the chances of a shortage of rice, owing to the withdrawal of the German ships from the run. Profiteering was closely guarded against. The price of foodstuffs and all other commodities was ordered to remain at the same price as before, and any person disobeying this order was severely punished. A committee was then formed to regulate the foodstuffs from time to time in accordance with the prices ruling in Singapore. Sarawak started well with the arrival of over two thousand bags of rice from Singapore, and between six and seven hundred bags of flour. Unfortunately there was no milk, and a rumour reached Sarawak that no foodstuffs were to be allowed to leave Singapore



any longer. But as usual, when a great move has been made, there was only a momentary chaos, and then everything shook itself down into a slot again. Owing to the Raja Muda's excellent management, and the enthusiastic co-operation of his Government officers, everything adjusted itself into a perfect routine, and the danger of panic was suppressed.

It was hardest of all for the Malays to realize that great nations had risen and were slaying one another mercilessly. "What is it for?" they kept asking us, and those more educated than the others said: "Surely these Germans have the enlarged livers?" How could it possibly be explained to these people who were without desire and without ambition, that the nations were at war for supremacy and power, and for very little else? They simply would not have understood; for all that they could understand or care about was that the prices should rise, and that their rice should be sufficient, and that their wives should give birth to many sons. And so the Great War passed over their gentle heads, conveying nothing to them. They sang and they beat their drums just the same, they basked in the sun, and gossiped in their houses; far more concerned in the fact that their neighbour's wife had a lover, than that Europe—the Europe they imagined they could see from the topmost rung of the wireless—was convulsed in a mighty conflict on the issue of which so much depended.

Many of Sarawak's younger officers returned to

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England either to rejoin their old regiment, or to enlist in the new Army. But many of the men working there were brothers, and the old Raja issued a decree that only one brother would be permitted to resign, and not both. Of course he was obliged to safeguard the Sarawak Service. "In spite of the War, Sarawak must go on," was his argument. "I cannot suddenly carry on my rule with inexperienced cadets, who do not even know how to speak the language."

Nevertheless he need not have been quite so hard and unrelenting, he need not have meted out such a reluctant sanction to their patriotism. With his back against the wall he snarled at the fate that was depriving him of some of the best men in his service. "If any of you resign in order to join up at home," he told them, "it will be with the distinct understanding that your services in Sarawak are at an end forever, for anyone who leaves me for this War will not return to me."

Many of the men were poor and with families dependent on them. They could not afford to throw up a permanent job for patriotism, however much they might desire to. It was not easy for these left brothers, whose urge for fighting was as strong as the ones who had enlisted, to remain in the quietness of the jungle, and to go about the simple dictation of their days as if the country they belonged to, the country they had been born in, was not in peril.

The Raja Muda returned to England during the War, leaving his father in Kuching. And it was

then for the first time that the true nature of his character was revealed. He would not, could not rest without being "in it," as he called it, but he refused all favouritism, throwing up jobs he knew in his heart he had only been able to obtain on account of his position. He endeavoured to enlist as an ordinary private, and even went so far as to pass his medical test with flying colours. This was not a bad accomplishment for a man over forty years of age, who had only half a liver left and had spent most of his years in the Far East.

But Sarawak intervened, and the order came through that he was not on any account to enlist. Undaunted, he joined an Anti-Aircraft battalion and was stationed on the top of Cannon Street Hotel. But this did not satisfy him for long ; the men knew who he was, and he was treated with deference and with preference, and it annoyed him. He ended by dropping a well-filled cartridge-belt from the top of the roof on to the street below, and this so unnerved him that he retired from the job.

A little later he made his way into some aeroplane works at Shoreditch, and there he stood for hour upon hour at a lathe, shaping little bits of steel for aeroplanes. Nobody knew who he was in Shoreditch. He was plain C. V. Brooke, as tired and grimy as they were. Whenever he arrived in a clean collar they cheered him to the echo, and plied him with questions as to how he had been able to obtain it. Those days at Shoreditch were some of the happiest he had ever spent, in spite of the dirt and the hard work they entailed.

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For at last, for the first time, his identity had been lost, and the men were accepting him for his true worth and not his title. He enjoyed the friendliness of these rough-and-ready people who helped him so willingly with his bits of steel, and saved him so gladly from getting into trouble as the Inspector made his round.

The Tuan Muda went back to the Berkshire Artillery as an instructor, and was invaluable in demonstrating and training the young boys who were enlisting. The Tuan Bunsu, or Harry Brooke, was in the 3rd South Lancashire, and went out to Egypt. The little boy with the untidy bootlaces, and the nose that was always bleeding, had grown into one of the most lovable and charming men in the world ; but he was utterly unsuited to war, and I often think it was this strenuous time he went through in Egypt that sowed the seeds of the terrible illness that swept this really charming personality prematurely from the world.

On September 30th, only eight months before his death, Sir Charles Brooke, Second Raja of Sarawak, handed over the control of the Dyaks in the Ulu Rejang and Batang Lupar to his eldest son, and for the first time in his life Vyner Brooke felt the reins of Government between his hands. On May 17th, 1917, at Chesterton House, Cirencester, the old Raja passed peacefully away. A week later his eldest son was proclaimed Raja, and one year after that Vyner Brooke was publicly installed.

It has always seemed to me an endless pity that Sir Charles Brooke did not live long enough to hear

the words of his son on the day that he was proclaimed; then, perhaps, the fears that had beset him on behalf of his beloved country might well have been laid to rest. The Proclamation was read from a platform specially raised on the steps of the Government Offices. It was the very simplest ceremony. The people gathered together at the foot of the platform, and many of them climbed into the trees that were near by, looking in their coloured garments like immense blossoms amongst the bright green foliage. Roped in upon the dais was a space for the Europeans, and in the very centre of this space there sat the Raja. Then, amidst an expectant hush, he rose to give his people his first public address as their ruler.

His delivery was excellent, and he could be heard throughout the length and breadth of a long building. On this particular occasion his voice carried even to the outskirts of the crowd where the Chinese coolies were standing, leaning on their rickshaws, and the Tamils stood on guard over their cattle and their goats.

Speaking in Malay, the new Raja said:

“I make known to you, Datus, Pangirans, Abangs, Inchis, Chiefs and all classes of people in Sarawak, that I will on no account interfere with the Mohammedan faith, or with any other religions or beliefs of the people. As the white Labu and the Kundor fruit show white when they are split, so too is my heart unblemished towards you.

“Gentlemen, and Datus of the Council, and Servants of the Government, do your duty to the

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best of your ability, and show truth and justice in all your dealings. My people, rich and poor, need never be afraid. If you are in trouble or have anything to complain of, I wish you all to tell me so that I can help you . . . therefore never be afraid to come to me.

"I trust that you, gentlemen, Datus, Pangirans, Abangs, Inchis, Chiefs, Towkays, and all classes and nationalities will assist by straightforwardness, justice, and truth, to maintain and strengthen the Government of this country."

How easy it was for the people of Sarawak to gather from this speech that once again, for the third generation, there was a man in whom they could place their entire trust. The Brooke policy and rule had now covered a space of close upon eighty years, in spite of the fact that year by year the outside world turned this way and that in uneasy speculation as to whether rulers were better than dictators. Sarawak knew no doubts, no fears; another Brooke was upon the throne—someone, and something, they trusted and believed in.

It was on Monday, July 22nd, 1918, that Vyner Brooke, Third Raja of Sarawak, took the oath of Accession before the Council Negri and was publicly installed as the rightful ruler of the country. Early in the morning the river opposite had become transformed. A crimson banner spanned the road at the stone landing-place, supported by two tall masts covered by heraldic shields and little miniature flags. There was a long triumphal archway of these masts, hanging with garlands of coloured

paper roses, and reaching as far as the doorway of the Court House. At an early hour detachments from the Sarawak Rangers and Police arrived upon the scene, and took up their appointed stations upon the route.

At nine o'clock the cortège issued from the Astana, followed by the Tuan Muda bearing the sword of State upon a yellow cushion, and we were taken across river by the State Barge that had been originally a gift from the late King of Siam. The Raja was received at the stone landing-place by the members of the Supreme Council, and when they reached the topmost step the band pealed forth the Sarawak National Anthem. Slowly they went forward, the Raja a little in advance and sheltered by his official Royal Umbrella. The members of the Supreme Council fell into line behind us, with the Tuan Muda and all the native members. Slowly along that sunlit path they went, walking the pace that the Datu Bandar, owing to his great age and his failing strength, could manage. It was like a ragged, coloured ribbon winding along the whiteness of the path, and the long silk coats of the native chiefs were lovely to behold.

The interior of the Court House had been turned as if by magic into magnificence; the drab building which tried its cases on ordinary days and sat in judgment over murderers and thieves, now presented the care-free appearance of some fairy palace. The walls and joists blazed with the varied flags and emblems, and the narrow twisted pathway to it was lined on either side by Dyak

### THE THREE WHITE RAJAS

Anthem, and a thundering salute from the Fort guns. Vyner Brooke, Third Raja of Sarawak, was installed.

And what of the man himself? How did this shy recluse feel on being dragged into the open and forced to face a ceremony of that kind? Nobody who saw him installed that day could possibly have realized what had taken place behind the scenes of that colourful and awe-inspiring ceremony. For to Vyner Brooke any form of ceremony is a kind of concealed nightmare lying waiting for him in the recesses of his brain, so that when the actual time comes he is hardly a human being, and it is only by constant encouragement and a stiff whisky-and-water that he can be brought into action. From the time that he woke up on the morning of his accession until the ceremony was over, those about him were obliged to watch him constantly; otherwise he was quite capable of making himself ill on purpose to avoid the ordeal that lay before him. On this particular occasion I do not think he was even conscious of the human beings who swarmed about him like ants, dressing him, instructing him, and pleading with him. It was discovered that the moths had found their way into his uniform, and as he thrust his arms into the heavily braided coat, the sleeves fell out on to the floor. So he was tacked and pinned, and eventually perfectly turned out. Nobody could have guessed the prayers I was murmuring as he drew each breath, for fear that his uniform would split from shoulder to shoulder and fall to the ground.





THE RAJA AMONG HIS DYAK WARRIORS ON HIS INSTALLATION

On the Raja's right is H.H. the Rance, on his left the Tuan Muda



## VYNER BROOKE

And so it was that Sir Vyner Brooke, Third Raja of Sarawak, came to the throne, and Sarawak itself started upon a new era, a modern era, and the whole country stretched itself, as it were, as if it had but freshly wakened from a century of sleep. Vyner Brooke's reign was not—and is not now—an easy one. Year by year civilization has drawn its cloak about the naked shoulders of the natives. The Mission schools have oozed their way into the jungle, the white man is no longer a synonym of mystery and law. Equality of race, familiarity of contact, have taken away power and put in its place a sort of precocious liberty that has made the Dyaks and Malays more difficult to control.

Vyner Brooke has always been devoted to his people, and they all know they can trust him. They know that if they go to him and tell him all their troubles he will not turn them away, but will sit patiently for many hours and listen to what they have to say. It is this patience of his, this understanding of the native mind, that has been his strongest hold upon his country. Those who think they know this Raja most are in reality furthest from knowing him at all, and there has been no truer saying than that of the Chinese schoolboy who was asked to write an essay on the present Ruler and said: "I know nothing about the present Raja except that he is ALIVE."

Intangible as his father was before him, he also prefers to live quietly apart, away from this world of Society and strife. He has a few close friends, but very few, because in Sarawak we are obliged

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to be without favourites and exclusive. Friendship creates jealousy and discontent throughout the service, and Vyner Brooke tries hard to be impartial; but in being so it makes him appear frivolous and apart. A ready laugh, just the kind of laugh that Sir James Brooke must have had, and a genial good humour, have been his armour; for he has learned that those who rule countries must hide behind themselves. They are but the pivots round which the machinery of Government revolves.

I remember what I call a "Smartie" of Society saying to me one day, "My dear, I hear your husband is such a delightful man." (You know the kind of woman, and the kind of way she would make such a remark.)

I looked at her as blandly and icily as I could and replied, "Yes, I believe he is. I meet him sometimes on the stairs."

The look on that "Smartie's" face has kept me amused to this very day.

There are so many anecdotes that I could tell in order to show the utter simplicity and naturalness of this man who spends his entire time, when he is at home, going about in places where he is unrecognized, and talking to people who have not the remotest idea who he is. Three of these stories I will tell in order to convey the fun that he gets out of life, and the study he can make of human nature seen at its best and at its worst.

We were at the first night of some play in London. It was a very smart affair, and, as a matter of fact, it was a most unusual occurrence for my husband

to attend. As soon as we entered the theatre I went straight to my seat, but he remained in the foyer to finish a very excellent cigar that he was extremely loath to part with. As the people began to scatter he noticed a press-man with his camera who appeared to be waiting for some celebrity to arrive. Being interested in cameras, the Raja went up to him and asked him what kind of a machine it was he was using. They discussed the camera for a while, and then the Raja, who always has a cheerful word for everyone, asked the press-man if he was waiting for anyone important.

"As a matter of fact I am," replied the man. "I am waiting for the Raja of Sarawak."

The Raja, overcoming his shyness in his eagerness to assist the press-man, said with an awkward laugh, "But I am the Raja of Sarawak, so now you can fire away."

To his astonishment the other gave him a withering look and replied, "You the Raja! I bet you a thousand pounds you are not."

"All right," said the Raja, "I'll take that bet, and I will go and fetch my wife to prove it."

He came to me and dragged me out of my stall and upstairs to the foyer in order to identify him, and I do not think I shall ever forget the profound look of horror on that poor young journalist's face.

On another occasion the Raja went into a small bootmaker's shop in Godalming to order a pair of boots. He had been walking quite a long way and I have no doubt looked dusty, and hot, and unprepossessing. The shopman looked him up

### THE THREE WHITE RAJAS

and down and then produced a somewhat serviceable but hardly ornamental pair of boots. "Of course I have better pairs than these," he explained, "but it is no use showing them to you because I know you could never afford them."

It is only of recent years that the Raja has taken to keeping race-horses, and I think the tortures of shyness he undergoes at having to enter the ring whenever any of his horses are running almost spoils the entire racing season for him for the year. I happened to be with him on one of these occasions, and I could see that he was so nervous he really hardly knew what he was doing. To my horror I saw him go up in his genial way to a jockey who was not his own, thump him on the back, and say, "Now mind you go in and win for me, my boy." The feelings and the language of his own jockey can hardly be described.

I do not think people in England understand intangible men—men who are recluses, and who like to be alone. I do understand them. I have lived long enough out East to know the heavenliness of silence, and the warmth, although it may seem strange to say so, of being by oneself. And I can understand this man, who has lived most of his life in remote places, preferring to remain so, even when he is in England.

During the reign of Vyner Brooke much has been discovered about the distant country that he rules in, and many legends and beliefs have broken through the dense thickness of the jungle, and revealed a little of the mind and the characters of

these primitive people. Vyner Brooke has spent many months travelling in the interior. He has become intimate with the Dyak Head-Hunters, has seen their dances and listened to their tales. He has seen how the people of Sarawak fit into their country as softly and unobtrusively as the carefully shaded colours of a tapestry. They do not stand out of the canvas of palm trees, and golden bamboos, and little orchids. The colours they wear upon their pale-brown nakedness blend with the crimson cannas, and the flame-of-the-forest petals as they fall. It is the simplest country in the world, with the simplest happenings, but the myths and the magics and the traditions have a strange wild beauty, revealing why it is there is so much fascination about these savage tribes.

I suppose it is only natural that in a tropical country of this kind, covered as it is by dense jungle, and inhabited by such primitive people, Tree worship should be indigenous. The Dyaks believe that the trees have souls, and sometimes they will not dare to cut down an aged tree that has dug its roots deep into the soil. In some places where an old tree has been blown down in a gale, they will set it up again, smear it with blood and decorate it with flags in order to appease the soul of the tree.

The Kayans also believe that certain trees have souls, but these trees, so they say, yield the poison used to envenom their arrows. They think that the Spirit of the Tasem trees (*Antiaris Toxicaria*) is particularly hard to please. But if, on the other

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hand, the tree has a strong and agreeable perfume, then they know that the man who felled the tree must have succeeded by his offering in mollifying the peevish and fretful Spirit.

I have often noticed that native fruit trees have their trunks scarred as if they had been hacked by an axe, and I was told by the Dyaks that this was only done in order to increase their fertility. Strange as this method of horticulture may seem, it has its parallel in many other parts of the East. The underlying motive in the native mind is apparently to intimidate the trees and bring them to a sense of their duty.

In some districts there must not be any talk of corpses or demons, lest the Spirit of the growing rice should be frightened and flee away, even as far as Java.

The Dyaks believe that when a man dies by accident it is a sign that the gods mean to exclude him from the realms of bliss. Accordingly, his body is not buried, but is carried into the forest and there laid down beneath the trees. The souls of such unfortunates pass into trees, into animals, or into fish, and are much dreaded by the Dyaks, who abstain from using certain kinds of wood, or eating certain kinds of fish, because they say that they contain the souls of the dead men.

When a Dyak was once walking through the jungle with Sir Hugh Low, the latter observed that his companion, after raising his sword to strike at an immense snake, suddenly stopped and suffered the reptile to escape. On being asked the reason, the Dyak



explained that the bush in front of which they had been standing had been a kinsman of his own, who, on dying some ten years before, had appeared in a dream to his widow and told her that he had become this particular bamboo tree; hence the ground and everything upon the ground had become sacred, and even the serpent could not be interfered with.

There is a certain tree called Rara which the Dyaks believe to be inhabited by a Spirit. Before they will attempt to cut down one of these trees, they will strike an axe into the trunk and leave it there, calling upon the Spirit either to quit his dwelling or give them some sign that he does not wish to be tampered with. Then they will return home. On the following day they revisit the tree, and if the axe is still fixed into the trunk they know that they can fell the tree without the slightest danger because there is no Spirit in it. If they find the axe lying on the ground they know for certain that the tree is inhabited, and they will not under any circumstances whatsoever destroy it. Surely, they say, "it must have been the Spirit of the tree in person who expelled this axe."

When the Dyaks fell the jungle on the hills they often leave a few trees standing on the hill-tops as a refuge for disturbed and dispossessed Spirits. Sailing up the Sarawak river you may pass from time to time a clearing in the forest where manioc is cultivated. In the midst of every clearing a solitary tree is always left standing as a home for the ejected Spirits of the woods. Its boughs are

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stripped off, all but the topmost, and just below this leafy crown two cross-pieces are fastened, from which a few coloured rags will dangle.

The Kayans are of the opinion that Tree-Spirits stand very stiffly on the point of honour and visit men with their displeasure for any injury they may have received. Hence, after building a house whereby they have been forced to ill-treat many of the trees, these tribes observe a period of penance for a year, during which time they abstain from many things, such as the killing of bears, tiger-cats, and serpents. The period of this taboo is brought to an end by a ceremony at which head-hunting—or a pretence of it—plays a part. Some of the Dyaks are even more punctilious in their observance of taboos after the building of a house. The length of the penance will chiefly depend on the kind of timber they have been using in the construction of the dwelling-place. If the timber used was of the valuable iron wood, the inmates of the house are obliged to deny themselves various dainties for at least three years. But the Spirits of the humbler trees are not nearly so exacting.

The Sea Dyaks will point to many a tree and say that it is sacred because it is the abode of a Spirit of Spirits; to cut down one of these would provoke the Spirit's anger, and he might avenge himself by visiting the sacrilegious woodman with a fatal sickness. Some Dyaks demonstrate their belief in the beneficent power of the Woodland Spirit by taking up the roots of a certain bulbous plant which bears a beautiful crown of the whitest and

most fragrant flowers. These roots are preserved with the rice in the granary, and are planted again with the seed rice in the following season, because the Dyaks say that the rice will not grow unless a plant of this sort can be placed in the field with them.

The Kayans do not seem to have a very clear or accepted dogma about their gods. Some assert that they dwell in the skies, but others regard them as dwelling below the surface of the earth. The former opinion is in harmony with the practice of erecting a tree before the house with its branches buried in the ground and the root upturned, when prayers are made on behalf of the entire house. These trees seem to be regarded as a kind of pathway of communication to the Superior Powers.

An extraordinary instance of the trees themselves being sacrificed to the Spirits was once recounted to me. One night, after a heavy gale, a disturbance was caused in Kuching owing to an old and nearly dead superstitious custom being resorted to. During the full force of the gale several men in the lower Kampongs rushed to and fro with swords, cutting down fruit trees—not only their own but also their neighbours'. This act was supposed to frustrate the evil Spirits of the storm who would otherwise have destroyed both life and property by a curse known as Kudi, or in Kuching dialect Bua. It is extraordinarily easy to create what almost amounts to a panic amongst the natives by suggestion, or by the telling of a tale that some Spirit is haunting the jungle near their homes.

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Sarawak is rich, as I have already said, in legends and myths. These myths are of an interest which a casual acquaintance with the people would not lead one to suspect, and sometimes to the sceptical European they have been even found amusing. But I do not think of them lightly, and I cannot help feeling a certain thrill of the supernatural when they are recounted to me. I have often regretted that I have not made a proper study of this lore, in order to have been able to draw from them these folk-stories of which they are half-proud and half-ashamed.

Here is the legend of "The Spirit of the Mountains," a tale that explains the native fear of certain places in the jungle, and the reverence they have for some weird and withered tree.

Many many generations ago, when the great river still flowed through the Dutch lakes down to the Undup and Batang Lupar to join the great river of China, the whole of Nimong mountain belonged to a certain powerful being named Batang Anyut. He was more than a mortal, for on his mother's side he was descended from the Spirits. He was possessed of a famous sword named Ilang. The fame of his exploits with this sword were spoken of in the Courts of the Emperors of China, and such was his prowess that three long-houses, each bigger than all the houses in Stumbin put together end to end, would hardly hold the heads he had taken in fair fight (for never once had he been known to strike his man without giving

his war-whoop, and one stroke of this mighty sword of his was always enough). His temper was fiery and shorter than that of a wounded boar at bay, and this, combined with his sword Ilang and his skill in ambush, explained his wealth in heads.

With him, on the hill, lived his sister Uteh, a craftswoman at sewing. She had her two sons with her; there were no others in the entire countryside.

When the two sons were of a proper age, their uncle Anyut decided to share out the hill Nimong—a piece for him, and a piece for the two sons, who in return would have to support their mother, as he was now getting too old to supply her with the needles she desired for her sewing. You may be sure that he retained a very large part of the hill Nimong for himself.

All went well for a short time, but then one of the two sons noticed that his padi was being eaten up each night. The matter became so serious that at length he decided that he would sit up all one night in order to trap the intruder. After many hesitations he chose a night—unfortunately for him it was a moonless night when he went alone up the hill to keep his vigil. Very soon he heard rustlings, loud rustlings, as of a great beast in the distance, but rapidly approaching. His loneliness, the dense darkness, and the noisy approach of this unseen foe, rooted him to the ground. He was powerless to flee. Suddenly, on a furious crescendo of crashing branches and splitting of tree trunks, there reared up before him a fearsome

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Grasi (evil Spirit), tall as the highest tree, broad as the widest river, distorted and humpbacked, his eyes as big as two moons, and glittering with a green and gruesome light. At last the limbs of the terrified mortal found their power to function, and with a scream of horror he fled down the hill-side, with the ghastly laughter of the Spirit ringing in his ears and the fumes of its breath scorching the hair on the back of his head. (This is why the Nimong people now wear their hair cut short.)

In the end he rushed into his house and straight into his room, where he immediately fell in a dead faint on the floor, and for three days and three nights did not move. When he awoke, it was to an ague of trembling so acute that the beating of his heels on the ground created an earthquake. It was in this very earthquake that Bukit Sadok first appeared and divided the great river into the valleys that have now dwindled to the Batang Lupar and the Rejang rivers.

After many months his full faculties returned to him, and he began to wonder how he was to continue his farming with such a monster abroad upon his land. So he decided to go to China, where in those days there lived many learned men in the arts of dealing with Spirits. He went, however, with some misgiving, for he doubted if there was any living man who could effectively deal with so terrible a Spirit as the one that he had seen.

After many wanderings he came upon an old, old man who told him that he himself had had contact with just such a Spirit and that he knew

of a method of moving this Spirit along. He gave him a powerful charm, which he called Obat Chit, that was to be spread all over his farm.

Unfortunately, when the old man told him that he was capable of "moving this evil Spirit along," he was speaking literally; all his charm did was to move the Spirit along on to his brother's farm. The brother, being aware of his elder brother's experience, decided immediately to visit the same learned man and see if he could not get rid of his unwelcome visitor. So, taking a bundle of heads from his uncle's store (the only currency they had in those days), he also went to China and procured some of the famous charm.

Once again the awful Spirit moved on, but this time he had nowhere to go but to the uncle's land. The uncle, not being aware of what had been going on in his sister's and his nephews' houses, was at a loss to account for the damage to his crops. However, after some deliberation he came to the following conclusion. His nephews, having been given a share of his land, were now becoming rapacious, and desired the whole lot. So he decided to end the trouble in characteristic fashion by taking his sword Ilang to them. Crimson with rage, he tore along the path for his revenge. But luckily he met his sister, who, seeing him on evil bent and so close to home, reproved him for making a noise at an unseemly hour, and induced him to calm down. Being of the same descent as the uncle, she was as wise as he was, and she also had some power over him. When he had so far recovered

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himself as to be fool enough to argue with a woman, he explained about the losses in his farm, giving her full details, and telling her the exact amount that it had cost him. Then his sister was able to explain the affair of the wicked Spirit, and how her sons had sought means with which to get rid of it. This made the uncle seize once more his sword and friend Ilang and redouble his threats against his hapless nephews. However, Uteh the sister was not without some cunning, and so, breathing several spells, she caught up a log of wood that happened to be lying by and struck the uncle a terrific blow upon the back of his head. He fell at her feet unconscious. When he came to, she asked him if he would listen to her or whether he would like her to give him another blow. It seemed strange that the hands that threaded so fine a needle should have been capable of such cruel and violent methods.

However, she must have delivered a convincing blow upon the uncle's head, for, although not in the mood for reasoning at all, he still had the wits to know that he had no desire that she should repeat what she had already done to him.

In the end the uncle was sent off to China to see if he could raise a better brand of charmer than the one with whom they had been dealing so far, and off he went, breathing many unquotable vengeance against his nephews, who spent their time voyaging in China, and on their way back delivering many illicit Spirits in other people's land when they were not looking.



Yet it was good for Batang Anyut that he went to China, for the advice he was given was so good that it has been used by all Dyaks until this day. The good advice was this. They must first make sure that the evil Spirit was on the mountain, and then they must fell a belt of jungle all round and about the mountain; for it was felt that the Spirit was certain to be a jungle-dweller and therefore would not cross cleared land. Having cut the belt all round the hill, there was nothing left to do save continue the felling upwards, thus driving the evil one to the utmost summit. They must never fell the jungle right on the top or he would have nowhere to retreat to, and the whole tribe of Spirits would visit their wrath upon them. They must also be careful not to make the remaining branches of the trees upon the mountain too small, or maybe the Spirits would be angry, and occasionally come down to visit their wrath upon them. This was accordingly done, and the scheme was a success, and that is why you will always see that the Dyaks never fell the entire jungle hill on which there is a Spirit, but leave his jungle sanctuary alone upon the top. Furthermore, you will always find that the only people who can ever see this particular kind of evil Spirit are those who have felled too near to the top of the mountain, and have forced the Spirit to descend into some home that is not too small for it.

On Nimong itself, the originator of the scheme and of its first exponent settled down there and made himself a lake upon the summit of the hill,

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which lake was filled with the purest water that the Spirit could drink. The sign by which to know that this lake was the work of the Spirit is that although it is surrounded by trees, no leaf has yet fallen upon the water.

This lake was in existence only a few years ago, but unfortunately at about that time some extra felling was done near the top of the hill which must have greatly displeased the Spirit, for one day the lake suddenly sank into the ground and has never since been seen. The very day of the felling, one of the men slipped on the mountain-side and plunged to his death below.

Of all the people who were concerned in the felling round and about the lake, not a single one remained alive within the year.

There is a certain road called the Sungei Tengah road, because of the presence of a snake reputed to be twenty-five feet in length. This was a supernatural snake, so they said, and many dogs and fowls had been disappearing, but the climax was reached when this awe-inspiring reptile swallowed a Chinaman.

It appeared that a Chinese seller of fish went out into the jungle with two of his favourite dogs to try and find a certain sweet-smelling wood. The jungle happened to be close by the Sungei Tengah Estate, and almost touching the road they said was haunted. Whilst the man was wandering about he came to a certain spot where it was his ill-fortune to see this huge and hungry snake hanging on to the boughs of a tree. How he was

caught by it has never been quite known, but somehow or other the snake managed to coil itself round his body. Owing to the slowness of the Chinese intellect, the man did not at first attempt to get away, and only quite suddenly did he begin to fight this fearful creature. Then he remembered that he had brought no weapons which would enable him to slay the reptile, so there was no chance for him to escape from the great coils. The snake twisted him tighter and tighter until at last he could hardly breathe, and then, with one final gasp, he died.

The unfortunate man's dogs could not understand what had overtaken their master, and for three days and three nights they sat beneath the tree, and only because driven by hunger did they return to the empty house. For many months search was made for the snake, but it was never seen again; only the Chinaman's hat was left beneath the tree to bear testimony to what had taken place.

Travelling up in the headwaters of the rivers of Sarawak is always attended with a certain amount of risk both to person and property, not only to the traveller, but to the house-dwellers as well who inhabit the low banks of the rivers. This story deals with the house-dweller more than with the traveller, and occurred after the Raja had passed with safety up the rapids. It is a remarkable thing that the natives never seem to lose their heads amidst the roar of water in the rapids, a roar so loud that a man can only be heard by

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shouting into his neighbour's ear. Only those who have shot a rapid can appreciate the thrill of this amazing adventure. There are the rocks and the snags to negotiate, and then the sudden dip at a sharp angle, followed by the rush of many waters. Sometimes the boat will fail to rise at the foot of the rapid through some fault either of the boat itself or of the crew. Then you either sink or are flung into the seething river. Some boats have been sucked down and sunk, and everybody, even the strongest swimmers, drowned.

The Raja had reached a certain Penghulu's house at a place called Dapoi, and the water seemed just right for ascending the river. The rapids at this particular spot were short and swift, and there were snags round the corners of the river. In the afternoon the Raja noticed that the Bukit Dulid mountain was wreathed in unusually dark and threatening clouds, yet up to that time there had been no rain. Being very tired when they landed, they had all retired early to bed. They had not been sleeping long when they were awakened at midnight by a noise that sounded like the grinding of a mighty coffee-mill. Then the shouting started, and the Raja became fully roused to his surroundings. The noise increased gradually into a prolonged rumble, and then quite suddenly it broke into a roar. The natives began rushing to and fro outside, and their cries became mingled with the wailing of the women. The Raja went out on to the verandah of the house, and there he found his host, the Penghulu, crouched

on the ground invoking all his deities to come to his aid.

When at last he paused for breath the Raja asked what was the matter and what this terrible noise was all about.

The Penghulu replied that the river was rising rapidly and that they were afraid for the safety of their house, they were afraid for the safety of their padi huts where the people had stored all their property, and they were afraid for their wives and for their children. The owners of houses were busy catching the fowls and the pigs, or calling upon their gods. The whole place was a turmoil of unrest and of prayer, and all the while the waters were rising inch by inch.

Four of the Raja's men went down to see to the boats, and they were in the act of untying them so as to pull them up on to higher ground, when a bank of water suddenly swept on them and they saw the high ground above them disappear. They had just time to climb up into a big tree before the water was upon them. From this tree they saw all three of their long-boats swept away by the flood, and it was all they could do to cling on to their resting-place, as the tree shook violently to and fro. The flood lasted two hours and then went down as suddenly as it had risen. Meanwhile in the house several invocations to the gods were being conducted, and the unfortunate fowls and pigs were being slaughtered throughout the house, which was of an enormous length. The Daiyong happened to have a very fine and

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musical voice, and lying there in the dark the effect produced was eerie, until it began to soothe, and then at last to send everyone to sleep. The next day, when the Raja went out to see what damage had been done, he found the natives having great trouble in procuring boats, as all the craft on the river had been submerged, and the majority of boats belonging to the house had been either swept away or dashed against the posts of the house by the water. Smaller boats were hung up in the trees, and a great many of them were splintered into matchwood. The corpses of fowls and pigs were also seen strewn upon the higher ground, or swinging from the trees; in one case a live pig was discovered about fifteen feet up, astride upon a branch, clinging on to it for dear life with all its feet. This flood was called the Menuang Rapid, and has not been forgotten even to this day.

I think everyone who visits Sarawak should make up his mind to spend one night at least in a Dyak house, for this is an experience that, once felt and seen, will linger in the memory forever.

The long cool verandah with the night falling over the jungle like a velvet cloak, and one by one, like little lanterns lit by the hands of God, the stars glistening out of the dark sky. The noisy turbulent jungle, with the roar of the river tumbling over the great rocks and seeming to grow louder as the night appears; the sound is in a way disturbing, and yet so rich in quality, so lovely in tone, that it is like a melody played on some muted instrument.

Thick water—water that has weight, not a dancing rippling stream, but a dangerous swirling river with rapids that have to be passed over, and whirlpools that turn and twist it into a thousand confused waves. The Dyaks remain in the house, and the lights of their torches cast strange shadows on the trees near by. The bamboo floors creak as their naked feet pass over them laden with farm food, and mats, and blankets for the night. A young girl steps gracefully down the notched pole which is their stairway, carrying a water-gourd upon her head. From below the long-house there is the sound of many animals—pigs grunting, cocks scratching and quarrelling and clucking at some grains of dried-up rice. Inside the long-house the torches point a wavering light upon a cluster of dried and blackened human heads that hangs above the hearth. The drone of many voices is interrupted by the howls of the scavenging pariah dogs, and the whimper of some hungry baby whose mother is away upon her evening gossip.

The Dyaks are never idle. Some of them are mending their spears, or splitting rattans for making mats or baskets. Some are repairing their old fish-traps, or their deer-snares, and one or two of the younger boys are whipping together two curved slats of wood to make sheaths for their Parangs. One old man monotonously sharpens a knife upon a stone, and feels the edge of it with his gnarled and toughened hand, whilst an even older man dandles a baby on his lap.

Some mats are laid down on the centre of the

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floor, and from one end of the house there comes the soft throb of a gong. There will be dancing tonight, for the Tuan Raja and the Tuan Raneé are there, and the Dyaks smile at one another in anticipation of the gin they will be presented with. In a little while the dancing will commence, and the young men are already assembled outside waiting for the signal. In a few moments the orchestra will enter, and the Kromong, a series of small gongs slung on to rattans in a long wooden frame, will strike up. There are a number of larger gongs called Tawak accompanying these Kromong, and some drums. A Dyak squats upon the floor in front of the Kromong, a wrinkled cigarette drooping from his lips, and goes over a series of notes with two soft wooden sticks. The larger gongs are then hung up from the beams, and taken over by their players. The drums are about three or four feet long, and maybe about five or six inches wide. They are played by the slapping of their hands upon the hide. They are made of monkey-skin as a rule. First they tap the drum with the tips of their fingers, and then with the ball of the hand, the drum being held in the player's lap and steadied by a rattan loop hooked over the end of one of his big toes. At a given signal the orchestra tries over a preliminary uproar, and one or two of the young men advance shyly towards the mats and practise a few steps. They are like shy young children, and push one another forward, giggling and wriggling, into the centre of the mats. Eventually one of them is brave enough to begin, and



slinging a fine war-coat upon his shoulders, and placing his warrior's head-dress upon his head, he lays a Parang and a shield upon the floor, and stands for a moment like a perfect image in bronze.

Suddenly the music starts: drums thudding and gongs throbbing, keeping perfect time. I wish I could describe this primitive music, and convey how it seems to breathe the very spirit of the jungle. There are people who say that the wailing of the bagpipes thrills them; I can assure them that this is nothing to the stirring quality of the Kromong gongs. With a blood-curdling yell the dancer leaps into the centre of the mat, balancing upon one heel and slowly revolving with a kind of heel-and-toe motion, his arms swaying with glorious and supple grace. Slowly he crouches and poses, his slim brown body glowing in the torchlight. There are black and white hornbill plumes upon his head-dress, and silver bracelets jingling on his wrists. His arms are like rippling snakes as he crouches low upon his mat. Then, with a sudden shout, he seizes the Parang and the shield, and leaps into the air. Twisting and turning round and round he spins, he sways to and fro in light and perfect balance. He goes through the pantomime of war, attacking and defending himself in single combat. His attitudes are perfect. His arms outstretched, one grasping the Parang, the other guarding his body with the shield. If he is a really exquisite dancer he will kneel down and bend backwards until the plumes of his head-dress

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sweep the floor ; then, like an uncoiled spring, he will leap on to his feet, holding the Parang, which is razor-sharp, between his teeth, or sometimes balancing it upon his shoulders. One slip, and the blade would cut him to the very bone.

Eventually the music ceases and the dancer, panting and pouring with sweat, comes to a halt, and stripping himself of his war-trappings he modestly and smilingly acknowledges the applause his skill has roused. Another will take his place, and the gongs and the drums will throb into life once more . . . and so the dance goes on into the night.

These performances are not always graceful, for their grace will depend largely upon whether the Dyaks are in a merry mood, or else how much of their favourite Tuak they have consumed. Sometimes they will indulge somewhat crudely in their flair for acting. For instance, there is the Ajat Munyiet (the monkey dance), which can be either amusing or too amusing to be actually allowed. In this dance two or three Dyaks will swing and clamber round the posts in the centre of the room pretending to be monkeys, and their performance is so vividly realistic that even the monkey-house itself might well be ashamed of it. Then there is the Ajat Timbang Anak dance, in which the actions of a woman nursing her baby, or pounding padi, or busy with her domestic tasks, will be in an exaggerated style performed. For the Dyak is above all else a natural mimic, and he can imitate a hoarse old lady, or a shy and bashful girl, and

be extremely entertaining indeed. There is the Ajat Puar Kesah dance, which is, literally translated, the Dance of the Itchy Blanket. It portrays a sleeping man struggling with the horrors of a blanket filled with fleas.

This dancing will sometimes continue until the early hours of the morning, and at the close of the entertainment a meal is provided of somewhat rotten eggs and rice, with ever more Tuak to be drunk. Finally the torches are snuffed out, and one by one the married men pair off with their women, and the bachelors wrap themselves in their woven blankets and lie down to sleep where they have been seated. The long-house has gone at last to bed. There should be silence, but in a Dyak village such a thing as silence is unknown. At about midnight the cocks have begun to crow, and they continue crowing until the day begins. A strange evening—weird, wonderful, and almost unimaginable, and yet, once seen, it will, as I have said before, remain as a memory forever in the heart.

I think it is the legends that fascinate me most: the strange stories that they tell, and the thread there is between what they believe and the miracles of the Bible. The Raja once related to me the native origin of the different languages of mankind, and this was how it was told.

Many thousands of years ago the inhabitants of the earth were all of one race, and spoke but one language. Suddenly a fungus of enormous size made its appearance and continued to grow larger

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and higher every day, and was looked upon by the people as a shelter from the sun and rain which had been sent to them by the gods. But at last it grew to such a size that their crops, on which they depended entirely for food, suffered by being deprived of the blessings of the sun, and of the rain, and of the dew. They began to wish that they had stopped its growth before. Sacrifices were offered to the gods, who were prayed to remove the fungus from the face of the earth. But their prayers were without effect, and as time went on it became necessary, for the preservation of life, to cut down the fungus whether the gods resented such an action or not. So the fungus was felled, and it was cut up into several pieces so that everybody could eat of it, with the result that they all succumbed to a kind of stupor, and they began to speak every man a different language . . . and the confusion was so great that they scattered over the surface of the earth. . . . It was this way that the many languages now spoken in the world originated.

Many and various are the Dyak accounts of the actual Creation, and, curiously enough, they do not coincide. They are unable to describe or to say who is the Deity (Petara). But they say in one of the accounts of the first appearance of mankind that the Petara gave birth to a boy who was without his members, and that they cast him into a pit when he became Pulang Gana, the god of the earth. The second child born to the Petara was a girl and she had no nose, so she was set adrift on

a river and she became Raja Jewata, the god of fishes. The third child was without any human form, and it was placed on the bough of a tree where it became an orchid. The fourth child was a girl who was named Siti Permani, and she was cut to pieces, the bits becoming padi and pumpkins and other plants. The fifth child was a boy and he was called Blang Pingang, as he had a white stripe round his waist, and he became Ini Anda, and lived in the Heavens. The sixth child became animals and birds, whilst the seventh was a girl whom Ini Raja Pipit called Dayang Petri.

All the brothers and sisters lived on charcoal, but Dayang Petri refused to eat, crying night and day. She was finally taken to the house of Ini Raja Pipit, where she obtained rice to eat and seeds for planting padi, a single padi seed being about the size of the largest Mango fruit. When she arrived at the marriageable age, she was wed to a man called Sakumbang Maran Bunsu Chenga Ubang, and she and her husband farmed the land, finding the work not at all laborious. The padi was only planted once and it lived for many years, bearing fruit continually. . . . The baskets for the padi could walk to the farm, and on their arrival there the padi would jump into them of its own accord and the filled baskets would walk home again. When the padi was being dried, it would jump up and down and husk itself.

One day, Dayang Petri took a winnowing basket and began to reap the padi herself, and this rash action of hers at once caused the padi to stop reap-

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ing itself, and what was more, caused it to give only one crop before it died . . . just as it does to this day. Her curiosity led her into further mischief. One day, taking a stick, she began to beat the padi as it was drying and jumping up and down and husking itself, and she asked the grains what they meant by it all. Immediately the grains not only ceased husking themselves, but they became reduced to the size that they are at the present day. All of which goes to prove that human beings have no right to interfere with the Mysteries of the Earth.

The Dyaks have three accounts of the Creation. One is that mankind was produced from a certain tree called Kumpang, the sap of which was like blood. Another tale is that friable earth was the origin of life. And some said that the Birds Iri and Ira were the creators of the world.

Since the introduction of the Missions into Sarawak strange tales have been unfolded, and it is from the son of one of our Dyak missionaries that I have been able to obtain these legends and these tales.

Dyak fables are but dream-tales, and many of them have not any tangible meaning to us: yet to the Dyaks themselves these legends are the most sacred memories they have. They tell them at their peace-makings and their feasts. Sometimes for days at a time they will recount these fantastic stories that have been handed down to them from generation to generation, and I will endeavour to translate a few of them to show how simple are

their minds, and how in a way they resemble the *Æsop's Fables* that have lived in the minds of civilization for so long.

This is the story of the Mouse-Deer and the Crocodiles.

Once upon a time, long long ago, a Mouse-Deer, walking along the bank of a certain river, descried on the mud an army of crocodiles basking in the sun with their mouths wide open, waiting to trap flies and other insects.

"Friends," shouted the Mouse-Deer, "how great a host of you I see. The mud-bank is nearly covered by you. If you are about to attack my country, surely you are bound to conquer it."

"Indeed we are many, friend Mouse-Deer," replied the crocodiles. "And there is not a single country that we have not conquered. Even all mankind are afraid of us."

"Exactly so," replied the Mouse-Deer. "I know all about it. You crocodiles do not fear death, and you are armed differently from other folk, for you use both teeth and claws, and your tails inflict terrible blows."

"True, friend Mouse-Deer," said the crocodiles. "But you are only partially informed about our armament. We have also big guns which we can fire at anything. Their reports are deafening, and for cannon-balls they throw out water."

"I believe what you say is true," quoth the Mouse-Deer. "But I am desirous of knowing your exact number. If I am not troubling you too much, do you arrange yourselves in close order from this

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side of the river to the other, so that I may find out accurately how many of you there are."

The crocodiles, flattered by the Mouse-Deer, quickly arranged themselves in order from bank to bank, until they resembled a floating bridge. Then the Mouse-Deer sprang down upon their heads and began to count "One . . . two . . . three . . ." as he passed over them until he had reached the opposite side. He then with one mighty bound leapt clear of them on to the bank, and turning round he laughed and laughed at the trick he had succeeded in playing. "How I enjoyed stamping on your heads a moment ago," he cried, and laughed again.

The crocodiles were furious. "So you were only making fools of us, were you?" they said. "Very well. We shall lie in wait for you by land and by water, and we shall catch you in the end."

"I am not afraid of you lying in wait for me," replied the Mouse-Deer. "Powerful as you may be in the water, you dare not go ashore."

"We can live on land as well as in the water," said the crocodiles. "And we shall never rest until you are justly rewarded for your insolence."

From that day onwards, the Mouse-Deer was afraid to venture near the rivers, and went to seek for water in the mountains. One day when he had searched in vain for a stream in which to quench his thirst, he was compelled to come down to the lowlands, where, in a marshy plain, he at length came upon a pool of water.

"Oh water," he cried, "are there crocodiles



within you?" But there was no answer. A second and a third time he put the same question, and yet received no reply. "Surely," he said, "there are crocodiles here, or the water would have lifted up its voice and spoken to me."

"Oot," grunted the crocodiles who were concealed in the pool. For the words of the Mouse-Deer had deceived them and they thought that he was really accustomed to receive an answer from the water, who would tell him when it was safe for him to drink. And so they pretended to be the voice of the water, thinking there to trap the Mouse-Deer. But once again the Mouse-Deer had been too clever for them, and as soon as he heard the crocodiles grunt he drew back. "Ah," he said, "so you are there, crocodiles, after all, just as I thought." And he laughed at them from the edge of the pool.

The crocodiles were very, very angry. "This Mouse-Deer is full of cunning and deceit," they grumbled to one another. "Let us not lie in wait for him here, but amongst the Buan trees where he is sure to come for the fruit, and surely he will not expect to meet us there?"

After some days the Mouse-Deer made up his mind to visit the Buan trees, but before he approached them too closely he called out to them, "Oh, Buan trees, will you tell me are there crocodiles lurking there within your branches?" There was no answer. Again he called and yet again, and then he remarked aloud, "There certainly must be crocodiles within the branches, and they must have forbidden the trees to answer me."

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"Oot," grunted the foolish crocodiles, deceived once more by the Mouse-Deer's words, and pretending to be the voice of the trees. "Oot, oot . . ." And the Mouse-Deer laughed and said, "I see you are there after all, oh crocodiles," and he ran away.

The crocodiles were furious with themselves for having been cheated into betraying their presence in the trees, and they called a meeting and arranged to wait for the Mouse-Deer amongst the Bemban rushes where he always went for his food. In the meantime, the Mouse-Deer, afraid of visiting his usual haunts, was in sore straits for food, and very, very hungry. At length the pangs of hunger drove him into visiting the Bemban rushes, but no sooner had he arrived there than he was seized by the leg, and imprisoned in the mighty jaws of a crocodile.

The brave little Mouse-Deer still kept up his gay demeanour. "That is not my leg, friend crocodile," he said blandly. "You have made a mistake, and are holding a Bemban rush between your teeth."

The crocodile opened his jaws to reply, and the Mouse-Deer leapt into safety. "The child of a tiger will never die," he cried triumphantly, and ran away laughing into the jungle.

The crocodile lashed his tail with fury. "Oh, what a fool I was," he groaned. "If I had not let go of him, it would have been his end."

"My friends," called the Mouse-Deer from a distant mound, "if you are anxious to kill me, let us have a fair fight. I will assemble all my relations and you can gather yours, and on the seventh

day we will meet at the Long Reach, and we will fight it out."

On the sixth and seventh days the Mouse-Deer went to the place appointed, and in order to make the crocodiles believe that he had a very large army, he busied himself in making as many footprints on the mud-bank as he could, by running up and down it. Then he went away.

On the eighth day a large army of crocodiles, well equipped, swam for the Long Reach, in order to give battle to the Mouse-Deer. But when they reached the scene of action, and saw the myriads of footprints on the mud-bank, they became afraid. But when they could not see the Mouse-Deer, they blamed themselves for being one day late.

"This is through our own fault," they said. "For we are late, and lo, the army of the Mouse-Deer could not wait for us." And so they all sadly returned home.

Now this story not only illustrates the character of the Mouse-Deer, but it conveys the light-hearted cunning of the Dyak, and how he will thread his way through the war-paths of the jungle and escape from every trap.

This is another of their favourite fables, and it is called The Story of Venus (Kumang) fishing with a scoop (Permansai).

Once upon a time, Kumang went out to fish in the still waters of the lake. She worked hard from early dawn until noon, but she was unable to catch any fish. At dusk, when it was time for her to return home, she dipped her scoop once

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more in the water for the last time, and she caught a tiny little Python. It was so pretty a thing that she took it home with her, and placed it in a valuable jar, and fed it daily. As months rolled on, the little Python could no longer be kept in the jar owing to its size; and so it was permitted to wander about in the house, and Kumang was pleased with it and with herself. At length the Python attained its full size, and the cost of its maintenance became burdensome. Kumang had spent all her wealth on the Python, who had eaten up everything in the house. The valuable jars . . . the brassware . . . the jewellery and dresses . . . and the cups and saucers had all been consumed by the Python.

Kumang began to feel very anxious about the future, and she cursed the day when she had taken the little Python back to her home. He was such a powerful monster that she could not very easily get rid of him, and there was nothing more left in the house for him to eat.

One day he took Kumang by surprise by asking her what was the exact size of her heart. It was a dreadful question to have put to her by a reptile of this size. She replied that her heart was only the size of a little leaf. . . . The next day the Python repeated the same question. Kumang, who then realized that her fate was determined, replied that her heart was only a little bigger than it had been the day before. "The suppression of hunger is a terrible thing," said the Python, "and I cannot wait any longer. I must eat your heart now . . . or I shall die."

It was a terrifying moment for Kumang, and dreadful were the sensations she went through. "Well," she whispered at last, "if you are going to devour my heart, you must first go into the jungle to look for a piece of bamboo in which to cook it. But if the bamboo says it is a bamboo that contains no flour . . . do not take it . . . but if it is a bamboo full to the brim with flour . . . take it, and come home and prepare your meal."

This deception gave to Kumang one chance of escape. After the Python had left the house, she said to the fowls, "Listen to me. When the Python returns from the jungle and calls me, you answer for me and say, 'Here I am . . . ' and I beg of you not to forget to do this for me."

Then Kumang left the house and she went to the padi farm of the fairy god (Kling), on which the undergrowth had been cut down, but not yet burnt. There she saw a Lensat tree, and she climbed into it, and after she had reached the top of it she poured a bottle of oil down the trunk of it to make it slippery.

The Python obtained the bamboo required, and returned to the house. Kumang was not there, and he was greatly enraged by the answers of the fowls. He then tracked the footprints of Kumang until he found her at last in the Lensat tree. He endeavoured to climb up it, but failed, owing to the oil that Kumang had poured upon the trunk of it, and so he coiled himself up round the foot of the tree, and kept watch.

Now it happened that on that very same day

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Bukutebu went to visit the farm because it was the day on which Kling was about to do the burning. To his great surprise and horror, he heard strange voices such as would be heard only in cemeteries. And then he heard a gentle voice like that of a goddess, saying, "Set fire to the farm, Uncle Bukutebu . . . the season that comes after this one will be but a short dry season . . . so now is the proper time." And then another voice was heard also saying, "Gurong-Gurong will overflow the promontories. Gurak-Gurak will overflow the valleys. If I die by the fire of the farm, my bones will remind thee of our separation."

This last was said by the Python in reply to Kumang's request that the farm should be burnt down. These strange utterances terrified Bukutebu exceedingly, and he fled for his life but lost his way, and got bruised and covered with mud from the many falls that he had had.

"Why are you like this?" asked Kling. "Where are the enemy that pursue you, and the multitude that threaten your life?"

"It was like this," said Bukutebu. "I heard strange voices like the voices that come from the cemeteries, and then I heard a gentle voice like that of a goddess, saying, 'Set fire to the farm, Uncle Bukutebu, the season that comes after this will be a poor one, and now at this moment it is the dry season.' And after this I heard another voice, harsh and fierce, saying, 'Gurong-Gurong will overflow the promontories, and Gurak-Gurak will overflow the valleys. . . . If I die by the fire

of the farm, my bones will remind thee of our separation.'"

"If that is so," replied Kling, "then it is the Spirits who have asked us to set fire to the farm, so let us go forth and set fire to it forthwith."

And so they went and set fire to the farm. The burning was a great success and all the undergrowth was properly consumed. After the fire had subsided, everyone went to look for the charred remains of animals and birds and reptiles, and their bodies were numerous and scattered on all sides. After they had gone round, they sat down and rested by the Lensat tree, and they partook of Betel and Sireh, and talked about the sowing-time. They sat upon that which they supposed to be the trunk of a felled tree, because it was long and straight and more than sufficient for them all. Whilst one of them was splitting an Areca nut on this supposed tree trunk, he looked down and saw that the tree was bleeding, and lo and behold they discovered that they were seated upon the back of a gigantic Python, a Python that had died from the effects of the great fire.

They then looked up and saw a solitary Lensat fruit amidst the branches of the tree. "Oh," they said, "would that we could reach this solitary fruit . . . this single fruit, and divide it amongst us all so that we can taste of it."

Then everybody tried to climb the tree, but they failed to do so owing to the oil that was upon the trunk of it. But eventually Kling managed to climb up, and he plucked the fruit and took it

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home with him and placed it on his bed. He then went in to have his dinner. Whilst he was dining he heard someone singing a love-song in his bed, and he stole quietly towards it, and he beheld Kumang (Venus), who had been transformed into a lovely maiden from the Lensat fruit.

After a while, Kumang married Kling, and they were known to live happily forever after.

And so these legends go on and on in a winding coil of confused and primitive superstitions, and who can say that our own fairy-tales are not in reality a strange mixture of beliefs and dreams such as these?

Vyner Brooke has lived for so long amongst these Dyak tribes that he can understand their traditions and their customs. He knows that they have taken heads as easily and freely as young boys will creep into an orchard and steal the apples from the trees. The element of adventure, the boasting of it afterwards, and above all, the clamorous praise of their women, has incited them to continue this practice for as long as the Raja and his Government will allow them. If a young Dyak courted a girl and he had no heads to his account, it would bring a great shame upon the girl and upon her family. It was as serious an offence as if a young Englishman had offered to marry a girl when he had no money in the bank. On the other hand, if a young Dyak met his love, swinging a head in either hand, the girl would be happy, and her family content.

No enquiries were made as to where these heads



had been obtained, and I regret to say that they would be more often female than male. They are not the great warriors they pretend to be, but just a charming, unreliable tribe who live on the traditions of the old. I remember the first time I ever saw any of these heads. It was up at a place called Kapit, a little lonely out-station up-river.

There was a small fort on the side of the river bank, like a stone that had been carelessly hurled and caught up in the mud. A garden had been planted, with small grass slopes, and a path bordered by hedges of gardenias. A few cows wandered round and about the fort with bells upon their necks, and a tame deer, a honey bear, and a mon-goose came down the slopes to meet us. It was pretty, but infinitely lonely. Just one European amongst those hundred and more Dyak chiefs.

We saw the heads in a room below the fort: a little dingy dungeon of a room with a rusty door that creaked upon its hinges. From out of the room there came a musty smell, not strong, but vaguely nauseating, and round and about the walls in bundles there hung the gruesome heads. They lay in grotesque heaps upon the floor, looking in that dim light like a stacking of huge chestnuts. The smooth skulls dipped suddenly into blackened eye-sockets. In one or two cases bits of singed flesh still hung on the lower jaws that were bound round in rattan. The Dyaks, whose memories are amazing, began to recount to me who it was who had taken each individual head. They knew the name of each man and woman whose grinning

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skulls hung on the dungeon walls, and even to what tribe each head had belonged.

Now this is the manner of their custom of Head-Hunting. They will take a head, say in battle or upon some expedition. Then, wrapping it in leaves, they will run to the nearest places of concealment, and throughout the night will keep a fire burning, and smoke the head, after binding the jaws round in rattan. They will then bear it in triumph to their house, where a great feast will be prepared, and in the midst of the feast they will place the head close to them and feed it with rice, even going so far as to place a lighted cigarette into the gaping mouth of it.

The Dyaks will only do this when they are excited or intoxicated, and it is done more in a spirit of light-heartedness than malice. The Kayan tribes have a more subtle manner, and they will talk to the head whilst feeding it, and pat the skull gently with their hands, imploring it to bring luck upon their crops, and success forever to their tribes. The Dyaks hang these heads in their open living-room, but the Kayans more often will break them up, and divide the pieces of skull amongst their warriors and their sons.

The Raja once met a young Dyak who had accidentally killed his old grandmother in mistake for a wild pig. When asked how he had managed to make such a gruesome mistake, the young warrior replied, "She was out in the jungle looking for vegetables, and seeing something very old and short of breath and making a noise something like

a pig, I drew my sword and struck her on the head. My grandmother had no right to enter the jungle at her age, and if she did enter it, she had no right to breathe like the snorting of a pig."

On August 4th, 1920, there was the famous Dyak Peace-Making at Simanggang between the Ulu Ai Dyaks and the Skrang, Layer, and Lemanak Dyak tribes. This occasion marked an epoch in the pages of Sarawak history, for this tribal feud had existed for a great number of years, and many attempts had previously been made to effect a satisfactory settlement; so you can imagine with what intense eagerness the Raja set forth for this Simanggang reunion.

The custom amongst the Dyaks for their peace-making was to hand over so many jars, and to receive so many jars in exchange, thereby satisfying the honour of both sides. This was known as the Palit Mata Sapu Moa ceremony, meaning in English "To dry the eyes and wipe the face." Once this exchange had been effected the Dyaks believed that all grief for those that had been slain in the feud was assuaged. No Dyak peace-making has ever been known to last without this ceremony. The jars exchanged were kept in the houses of the headmen of the respective tribes as tangible tokens of the settlement of the feud. At the time of the ceremony of the exchanging of these jars, terrible curses are uttered by the chief headman on either side on whosoever should at any time reopen the feud by taking the head of an aforetime enemy.

It is of the greatest importance that all the jars

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should be of the same species and size, so that the honour of both sides should be satisfied. If out of the thirty jars there should happen to be one that is inferior, it is considered a proof that this side admitted defeat by their enemies, and that the responsibility for the origin of the blood-feud rested upon them.

On arriving at Simanggang the Raja and his party were met by the two Government officers stationed there. An immense crowd of natives were lined up on both sides of the path, many of whom the Raja knew both by sight and by name. All the Penghulus were dressed alike in a bright uniform consisting of a black coat, scarlet trousers, and a yellow sash, the colours of Sarawak. Round their heads were wound small turbans of the same colours. A pavilion, decorated with Sarawak flags, had been erected on the plain, and long before the hour fixed for the ceremony, crowds of Dyaks began to arrive, and stationed themselves upon an open space that had been allotted them. Natives from all over the country had been pouring in for days previously, and the houses in the Bazaar and all round the river banks were filled up to capacity. The army, forming a hollow square, guarded the roped-off enclosure in front of the pavilion. Before this lay the thirty Ulu Ai and Engkari jars on the up-river side of the flagstaff which flew the Raja's own flag. On the down-river side there were the thirty jars from the Skrang, Layer, and Lemanak districts. Grouped round their respective jars were the chieftains of these tribes in full war-costume—brass hats befeathered

with hornbill and argus pheasant, and coats made out of the fur of the tree tiger, bear-skin, and the scales of the Jelawat fish, decorated with streamers of hair that they had at one time taken from the heads of their many victims.

When everything was in readiness and the rival chiefs had been placed in their two separate groups, the Raja arrived with his escort, and taking his place in the enclosure faced the jars round which were gathered many thousands of spectators and warriors from other districts. Calling the rival chiefs to approach him, the Raja addressed them in Dyak. His voice was clear, so that all in that vast crowd could hear him:

“Thus have I come,” he said, “to witness that all you people of the Upper river, Skrang, Layer, and Lemanak make peace by the killing of pigs and the exchange of jars, as a sign of having buried all your past enmities. So, in days gone by, did my father witness the peace-making between the Balau Undup and Skrang tribes, since when they have ever lived in peace and goodwill with one another. And to this day every race under my rule has such times of good faith from their afore-time enemies. Now that all you of the Upper river have settled the blood-feud with the tribes of the Skrang, Layer, and Lemanak, you recognize how all are of the same stock, and have no further cause for dispute—honour having been satisfied on both sides by the settlement of the Telaus meeting-place, and the blood of a pig having been spilled to testify to this.

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“But I have come here to ratify that compact. Like a father with his children, my sole desire is that all should live in peace and friendliness with one another, and all the country be open that you may gain in prosperity by the cultivation of the soil, and trading one with another in the produce of your forests. Therefore I desire to speak to you all this day, all you chiefs gathered together here from the Upper and from the Lower rivers. Make sure to remember my words.

“The oaths which you will utter according to your own custom this day, I confirm with my word that, should anyone reopen this feud at any future day, that man shall become my sworn enemy, and I shall demand the life of anyone who so takes the life of another. In the past your blood-feud has been recognized, but from now henceforth it no longer exists, having been finally settled this day before me by the blood of these pigs and the exchange of these jars.

“Therefore I now give, as a token of my word, to you of the Upper river three Chanangs to cover those jars which are to be held by Penghulu Apai Laja, Penghulu Kana, and Penghulu Jamit, so that these may be kept by you as a sign of my ratification of this settlement, evident to your children and all future generations.

“Likewise you men of the Lower rivers, remember my words, and as a pledge of these I cover these jars to be held by the Penghulu Labang in the Skrang, Penghulu Unji in the Layer, and Penghulu Suel in the Lemanak, each with a Chanang.

“And you, Penghulu Tarang and Chendan, I present with a spear, Kuna and Pua, to hand on from generation to generation as a seal from myself that the spirit of strife between these tribes of which, though you have lived amidst, neither has been a party, have now been finally laid to rest.

“Remember my words all of you chiefs.

“I HAVE SPOKEN.”

After the conclusion of the speech, the Malay officer called upon them to swear that they would follow the demands of the Raja. They raised their spears, and with a mighty shout they agreed that they would do so. They then returned to their positions and the ceremony of the oath took place. The two rival chiefs stepped forward and two small pigs were placed in the centre of the arena, the chiefs standing by them with spears ready in their hands. On their heads a wide band covered with beads from which long feathers waved, and tassels of human hair. On their bodies a crimson loin-cloth, and coats of various colours woven by the Dyaks themselves, and from which also hung tufts of human hair. They carried shields covered with curious designs, and decorated by the same gruesome trophies. The up-river chief had been in his youth one of the greatest enemies of the Government that the Brooke family had ever had to deal with. After his exploits he would retire to obscure caves in the hills far in the interior and defy all comers, and it had been well-nigh impossible to dislodge him.

With three weird and wailing cries he now called

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upon the Spirits to bear witness to his statement. Then, in a powerful and commanding voice, sentences flowed from his tongue with the ease and rapidity of a born orator.

It is curious how these people who can neither read nor write commit everything to memory, and how the eldest amongst them will relate anecdotes from memory many days on end, continuing their tales from hour to hour without repetition and without a break.

The chief swore to let bygones be bygones, and that he would be loyal to the Raja and his Government. Then the chief who lived nearest the coast having spoken, the spears were driven into the throats of the struggling little pigs. These pigs may not be eaten, but are thrown afterwards into the river. The spears were then thrust into the ground, the metal uppermost, and the ceremony of exchanging jars commenced. It had been thought originally that money would be exchanged between them, but afterwards it was decided it would be better for them to have something that they could keep in their houses in memory of the event, and as a constant reminder to future generations.

A Dyak's wealth is measured by the number of jars and brass gongs he may possess. These jars are in some cases of great antiquity and valued at many thousand dollars.

The officer called upon the names of the chiefs who were entitled to them. This continued until all the jars had been distributed, and to see these



men bearing them away was like a scene out of "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves." The Raja gave away several small brass gongs, brass tobacco-boxes, spears, and blankets, as tokens of his ratification of the peace-making and as a sign, according to ancient Dyak custom, that the spirit of strife in which they had lived had been finally laid to rest. Tuak was then drunk by everyone, the custom being to drink it off in one gulp, which is no easy matter unless you are accustomed to it.

There was one more peace-making ceremony during the month of February in the year 1933, and this time the Raja took with him our eldest daughter, Leonora, who was then about nineteen years of age. This peace-making took place at a little station some way beyond Simanggang, and it was at this time that the Raja made one of those famous addresses to the Dyaks which left a lasting impression not only on these tribes but upon everyone who listened.

"I have come here," he said, "to meet all you Penghulus and Tuai of the Ulu Batang Ai, in order to inform you of nine points which I want you to know.

"Firstly, I know perfectly well that in the last year or two you have not been very loyal to Government. To the faces of the Tuan Tuan, the Datus, and the Abangs you pretend to be very good; behind their backs it is quite a different matter.

"Secondly, I now make it clear to you all that you must have confidence in the Resident, the

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other Tuans, the Datus, and the Abangs, because all they say to you are my orders, and they are my agents.

"Thirdly, you are very foolish to believe all the stories originating from no reliable sources, which are spread up and down the country. They have no beginning and no ending, and are ridiculous.

"Fourthly, I shall not have any dealings with you in the future if you still continue in your absurd attitude towards Government.

"Fifthly, you are not to live above the Government Paks.

"Sixthly, as regards guns, cartridges, and powder, no more will be allowed to be purchased.

"Seventhly, I shall not allow any traders above Lubok Antu.

"Eighthly, as regards Asoon I have already promised that he shall neither be killed nor imprisoned.

"Ninthly, now understand what I have said to you. I have told you all this in order that there shall be no more trouble, and no more foolish talk.

"I HAVE SPOKEN."

It may seem to an English reader that the language of this speech has about it an almost childish quality, but that is the way, and the only way, to address these primitive tribes. They look upon the Raja as their great White Father, and it is as a father addressing his own children that he confronts them. The rebel Asoon that he mentioned was one of our most aggressive and tenacious rebels, who defied all advances and spread definite propa-



H H the Raja the Rance, and Davang Valerie arriving in Sarawak



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The Astana, the Raja's palace

IN KUCHING



ganda to undermine Government authority. There was nothing he would not have done to achieve his own ends. This Asoon had many followers, but the Dyaks followed him more from fear of his vengeance if they refused to do so than from any other reason. Asoon boasted that he would in time become the general leader and spokesman throughout Sarawak. He had refused to meet all Government representatives, and vanished during their visits to his district, but as soon as the Government representative left, Asoon would return, and renew his campaign of lies and terrorism. "Government would not listen to me," he would declare. "Even if I did come down to them, they would merely catch me and destroy me with death."

One day information was received that Asoon lay in a certain Dyak house, and that he was desperately ill. The Tuan Muda and a young Sarawak officer did not believe this rumour, and sent a message that he was to come down and meet them at once. They were staying in a place several miles away from Sibü. Strangely enough, Asoon obeyed, and arrived with his four brothers. This meeting took place in the Penghulu Endu's house, where, after the evening meal, Asoon was asked what he had to say.

It was no sick man who spoke. Asoon had seated himself in the shadow of a pillar so that his voice came out of the darkness. Beginning in a loud truculent tone, he made an exposition of the matters wherein Government was, in his opinion, at fault. He was interrupted and told that he had not been

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sent for to voice his opinion, but to explain, if he could, his attitude during the past two years. If he did not care to do this, then it was their turn to inform him that he was to give himself up at Sibü for trial for sedition; if he still refused to do so, he would be obliged to stand the consequences of such a refusal.

Asoon replied with a torrent of invective directed against the young district officer, amidst which it emerged that he would stand his trial if the Tuan Muda would guarantee his being let off with a fine, however heavy; otherwise matters were to be as before, and he would resist any action by Government with whatever force he could muster. He was not there, he said, to talk to the district officer, but to the Tuan Muda, who was the Raja's representative.

Asoon was then told that he was merely a loud-mouthed braggart and a liar, who had been successful up to a point, but that now even his fellow-Dyaks knew him for what he was. To the astonishment of everyone present this silenced Asoon, and there were no murmurs of dissent even from his brothers, or from the representatives of the seven Entabai houses, who had originally declared themselves as his adherents.

The Tuan Muda wound up the proceedings by informing Asoon that he was now thoroughly discredited, and exhorted him to go to Sibü, or to return with him to Kuching.

"For you must stand your trial," he said; "and the longer you hold out the worse it will be for you."

You have lied in saying that Government was in the habit of breaking promises to Dyaks. If this were the case, it would be a simple matter for me to have you taken prisoner at this moment. But I have promised that if you came to meet me on my way through, you would not be captured, but would be free to depart again until Government takes such steps as are considered advisable. If you come up for trial, you will serve your sentence, and after it is over you will live in comfort again amidst your family. If you do not, you will be a hunted man, with every decent Dyak house closed to you. If you come down to see the Raja I feel certain that he will order you to stand your trial, but, since you have spread the ridiculous lie that Government wish to seize and execute you, although you have on this occasion committed no murder, I will guarantee that any sentence you might receive will be one of imprisonment only."

Asoon left the house soon after daybreak the following morning. But his brothers and the heads of the seven previously disaffected houses remained behind long enough to tell the Abang that they were tired of such tactics and were quite ready to acknowledge their guilt and put themselves in the hands of Government. All five brothers were men of outstanding personality, and each of them had a great number of heads to his credit.

Asoon would not believe that he was not to be captured that night, and disappeared far into the jungle, with a gun in his hand and two small

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daggers stuck in the back of his loin-cloth. Expeditions were sent against this rebel, and for many moons he was not captured. Eventually the Raja himself went up into the interior, and it was to him alone that this warrior outlaw came and laid down his arms.

It was a personal triumph for the Raja, and an absolute proof of the faith these people have in his justice. Asoon was then informed that he would be kept permanently in the Kuching Constabulary area across river, and would never be allowed to return to his own country.

People in England talk about the silence of the East. Sarawak has no silence. All day long the Chinese hawkers cry out their wares, gongs are beaten in the mosque, and now and again the wailing of a one-stringed instrument will linger in the air.

At night there is the eternal noise of the bull-frogs and the beetles, and now and again their clamorous chorus will swell into a million tiny sounds, until it would seem as if every leaf and every flower and every patch of grass possessed some living thing that was calling to its mate. I found out all about the bull-frogs from my Malay boy, and why it was that they made such a clamour at night. He told me that it was the mother frog who, with her young upon her back, would go down to the water's edge and sit there listening to the father frog teaching his babies how to croak. He would teach them all sorts of strange weird sounds,



and he would go on repeating and repeating them until the baby bull-frogs knew the tunes of them by heart. I am not exaggerating when I say that one of the sweetest sights in the world is to see this family party—the father bull-frog giving the full-throated tones, and the mother helping the baby bull-frogs quietly as they perched upon her back.

In Sarawak there are the most wonderful birds in the world. Birds with soft notes that are more mellow than a flute; with notes that turn you and churn you inside, and make you draw a long breath and say to yourself, "Why do I ever leave this lovely land?"

The birds of Sarawak are not beautiful to look at, but they make the most lovely sounds in all the world. There is the Burong Tiong, black-feathered, with a yellow collar on his neck, and a yellow bill and legs. If you keep this bird for a year or two in your house he gradually learns to speak a few words, but the natives are superstitious and say that if you do keep this bird and one of your neighbours dies, the bird will die on the same day. I once knew a Burong Tiong who could say, "Gua ta tahu ka Burong," and I was told that he meant, "I, being a bird, do not know." This bird, I believe I am right in saying, is the only species of bird in Kuching that can speak. Parrots, at least talking parrots, are not to be found in Sarawak, they come mostly from Java and the Celebes and Makasar. Of course, in Sarawak there are sea-birds of every kind, and at night the natives catch some of these birds with

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loftus lamps. As soon as the birds go near the lights the men cast out Jala nets, and between ten and fifteen birds are caught at a time. There are big bats, Kalowang they are called, and these bats know when the Durian trees are flowering, and thousands of them fly from whithersoever they are to reach these trees in time for the fruit. I have been told that the flesh of these bats is good to eat, and some of the Chinese like them exceedingly. One bat will cost about fifty cents, and sometimes more, to buy. There are smaller bats called Kusing, that are caught in the lesser caves, and the Dyaks are particularly fond of eating them. They do not roast them, but simply burn and then eat them. It is somewhat difficult to imagine a more unappetizing meal than a half-scorched bat.

There is a bird called the Burong Padada; this bird has a very big bill, and when in flight sounds like the pulling of oars in a boat. The Embok bird is caught by the natives by means of playing one tune upon a bamboo flute. The Dyaks are very superstitious about this tune, and how it should be played, and they say that if a mistake is made the Spirits will take hold of them and destroy them. Strange country, strange superstitions and fears! Everywhere in the jungle is a tale to be told, and a legend to control and subdue the simple people who have lived there for so many generations. I would not care to interfere with their religions and beliefs. I would not like to be the one to say to them, "There is no such thing as the law of nature. Omens are but the fabrications

of a feeble mind. Spirits do not exist." I have seen too many weird and wonderful happenings in this far-away land not to realize that they, the people of Sarawak, know more and feel more and maybe understand more than we, who call ourselves a civilized race. The hornbill, or Tenyelang, is not an omen bird, neither is it mentioned in any of the Sea Dyak incantations, and yet, when the greatest of the Sea Dyaks' feasts is held commemorating the taking of a head in battle, its image is set on the top of a very long pole, its beak pointing in the direction of the enemy's country. Offerings are laid before it, and sacrifices made while solemn prayers are being recited. It becomes a god, or the representative of a god, to assist all those who reverence it, and it is believed by the Sea Dyaks that this adored image of the Tenyelang is able to confound their enemies and vanquish them.

From the Seribas the story is told of how this idolatrous worship of the hornbill originated.

One day, so the story goes, a Dyak named Menggin was out in the jungle with his blow-pipe, on the look-out for certain birds that had red eyes. He had walked far before he saw one, which he shot at and brought down, but to his astonishment the bird became a beautiful petticoat.

At first surprised at this sudden change, he subsequently became alarmed, and dreading the presence of evil Spirits in the loneliness of the vast forest, he hurriedly concealed the petticoat in his arrow-case and directed his steps homeward. That a bird should turn into a beautiful petticoat worked

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by the cleverest and most delicate of fingers, and that such a petticoat should be concealed within so small a compass as that of his tiny arrow-case, appeared so miraculous that he grew more and more bewildered.

Shortly after his arrival home, and being scarcely rested after his long walk, an unknown and beautiful girl appeared suddenly before him, and asked him whether he had chanced to pick up her petticoat in the jungle. This he confessed that he had done, and handed it to her. As a reward for his services the beauty, who proved to be no other than Inchin Temaga, the daughter of Singalang Burong, who lived in the Heavens, consented to become his wife.

In course of time Inchin Temaga presented her husband with a little son who was as good as he was handsome, and his parents were exceedingly pleased. When the child attained the age of about eight years, his mother began to show signs of home-sickness, continually talking of her people and of her Heavenly home. Then she took to singing love-songs with reminiscences of her many love-affairs, and this deeply annoyed her husband, who began to reveal his displeasure. But in spite of that she continued to annoy him in this way, in the meantime setting to work to weave two coats which were called the Jackets of the Birds owing to the peculiar pattern which was woven into them. These jackets were intended for her husband and child, and on their completion she invited them to come with her to her home in the Heavens,

which invitation, however, was refused by the infuriated husband. She then told her child that she was obliged to leave them and return to her own home and her people, and that whenever they wished to visit her they need only don the jackets, and they would at once be transported to her in the Heavens.

Judge of their astonishment when one day, while she was singing her love-songs as usual, her body suddenly became covered with feathers, and spreading her wings she flew away to the sky, leaving the bewildered husband and child lamenting their loss.

The little boy soon began to miss his mother, and cried himself to sleep each night, which greatly distressed his father, who tried every possible means of consoling the child, but without success. One day, having said to him that he would take him to his mother if only he had the means of doing so, the child informed him that she had left with him two jackets which, if worn, would give the wearers the power of flight, and would take them to the presence of Inchin Temaga. So Menggin and his son donned the jackets, and were instantly transported to the Heavens, and set before their long-lost wife and mother.

Singalang Burong was very pleased indeed to see his grandson, and gave him the name of Surong Gunting, but the mother was somewhat reserved towards her husband, having been already married at the time she went to the earth to find her petticoat; her first husband having gone on an expedition to a far country at the time. This secret Singalang

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Burong revealed to Menggin, and requested him to return to his own land, leaving his son behind him to follow him later on.

Now it so happened that one of the followers of Singalang Burong had been killed by Srapoh, so everyone had to mourn for the deceased, and Singalang Burong took this opportunity for instructing his grandson how to mourn for the dead, and how the property of the deceased was to be locked up in a box and the box not to be opened until the mourners had been on a war expedition, and if possible brought home a head in triumph to the house.

Singalang Burong then led an expedition against Srapoh, who lived on the horizon, in order to avenge the murder of one of his followers by Jubang, and on the way he taught his grandson how to use favourable omens, and how to avoid the unfavourable ones. He was to request his step-father Katupong to cry from the right, and the remainder of the omen birds, the sons-in-law of Singalang Burong, to cry also from the right. This he enjoined his grandson to strictly observe on his return to his father.

The expedition was a great success, and a trophy consisting of a human head was brought triumphantly home. The trophy was taken up into the house with great ceremony, and a feast held called Enchabuarong. The ceremony observed on the head being introduced to the house was as follows:

The head was placed in a bamboo receptacle in the open air just at the stairway of the house. Then

came the wife of Singalang Burong leading, and the rest of the women following, dressed in the most magnificent costumes; she wrapped the head in a home-made blanket and placed it in a beautiful plate, a fowl being immediately killed for propitiation. She then marched straight to her reception room in the house. For three days and three nights the warriors were sumptuously entertained, and each day and night the women took the head one by one in their hands, and marched through the house in procession, singing welcome songs to it; the head being finally hung up and smoked over a fire.

Preparation was then made for the Head Feast, when all friends far and near were invited, and Singalang Burong directed that an image of the Tenyelang should be made, and set up on the top of a long pole, its beak pointing towards the enemy's country in order that it might peck out their eyes and grind their heads to powder. This ceremony the grandson was enjoined to observe strictly whenever a head was taken in battle.

After a time the boy returned to the world, and it was he who introduced the different observances of omens . . . feasts . . . offerings . . . sacrifices and divinations to the Dyaks and to every Dyak tribe. In answer to the question why the hornbill should have been selected instead of any other bird, the Dyaks could only answer that it was a large and powerful bird, and its head as well as its tail feathers were as beautifully coloured as the little petticoat the Dyak Menggin had captured.

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Vyner Brooke was deeply interested in the Dyaks and their origin, and he discovered that unquestionably the Sea Dyaks belonged at one time to the Malayan race. Neither the Dyaks nor the Malays in Sarawak could have been called the Aborigines of Borneo, but to trace them satisfactorily required greater knowledge than even he possessed.

The first Islam ruler, the daughter of Pangeran Samatra, was married to a Dyak, and that was how their dynasty began.

Although the Dyaks know little about the stars, yet they have learned sufficient to enable them to know when to begin to clear the jungle for their padi farms, and when to sow the seed. When the Pleiades (Bintang Banyak) are seen on the horizon before daylight, they begin to look for favourable omens, and then to commence to clear the jungle. Besides the Pleiades they also make use of the three stars (Bintang Tiga). The Dyaks affirm that the knowledge of these stars was handed down to them from the following legend:

Once upon a time there lived in a far country a family which consisted of only three—the husband, the wife, and one daughter. When the daughter had attained the age of puberty, she began to feel greatly her solitary life. One day she told her mother that her existence was only a burden to her, and every time she watched the stars, she said how she wished she could marry one of them, for they were so beautiful and so brilliant.

The mother was very sad to hear what her daughter told her, and did everything in her power



to make her happy . . . but it was all in vain. The father took long journeys for days and days trying to find a human habitation . . . but alas, there was none to be found. At length they resigned themselves to the decree of Fate.

One day to their great astonishment and delight two young visitors appeared, and these two were handsome and strong. They were welcomed into the house and luxuriously entertained. It appeared that they had no special errand, neither would they tell from whence they had come. At length one of them married the girl, and as years rolled on, a child was born.

One day the father of the child assembled the whole of the family together and announced that he had something of importance to say to them. "What I have to say," he cried, "is just as painful to you as it is to me. My time of departure has come, and I must leave you. In fact, it is for your convenience and comfort that I am obliged to leave you thus. I feel dearly for you, and especially for my wife and child, and the separation is indeed painful, but it is necessary and, as I have said before, convenient. I was forbidden to tell you who I was, and my companion also, but I am at liberty to tell you now. I am the Pleiades, and my companion the Three Stars. . . . I think I have said all that I had to say, with the exception of this injunction which I have to lay upon you. It is for your own interest that I enjoin you imperatively, that if you see me before the break of day on the horizon . . . begin to clear the jungle for your padi farms at

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once, and when I have risen up to the middle of the Heavens . . . begin to sow your padi seed. If you fail to obey my injunction your padi will yield no fruits, or will be exposed to destruction by insects of various kinds. Although you cannot touch me yet, you and your great-grandchildren's great-grandchildren's children from now on and for ever and ever shall always see me." And then, in the midst of crying and lamentation, the two young men departed.

And so the cultivation of padi has been considered by the Dyaks as a sacred duty, that has to be performed with favourable omens.

Their ancestors have handed down to them this tradition . . . that the padi has a soul, and that it is a Sacred personage metamorphosed into padi for the sustenance of mankind.

There is also another legend telling us how the padi was first brought into Borneo.

Some generations ago a man dwelt in a little hut by the side of the river. One day after a succession of thunderstorms and heavy rains he was watching the snags and the driftwood hurrying down the stream, and on one of the snags he noticed a milk-white padi bird was standing, and behind the snag there was a great tree that had been torn up by the roots. This tree became caught up on a sand-bank, and it swung to and fro in the current with a portion of its root above the water. The man then noticed a strange-looking plant entangled in the roots, and unfastening his canoe from the landing-place near by, he paddled to the spot, and

took the strange-looking plant away with him to his home. It was a delicate-looking thing with leaves of the tenderest green, and thinking it was of no use, he threw it into a corner of the hut, and he very soon forgot all about it. When the evening came, he unfolded his mat, put up his mosquito-net, and almost immediately he fell asleep. In his dreams a beautiful being appeared to him and spoke about the plant. This phantom, who seemed more like a Spirit than a man, revealed to him that the plant was necessary to the human race, but that it must be watched and cherished and planted when seven stars were shining together in the sky just before dawn. The vision then disappeared and the man woke up, and pulling his curtains on one side he saw the plant lying in a corner of the hut . . . and it was shrivelled and brown and seemed to be dead. He left it there and went to visit a friend, to whom he related what had happened in his dream. "The Spirit of my dreams must have been a stupid Spirit," he said, "for it told me to look for seven stars when there are so many thousands shining in the sky." But his friend was a wise man, and he was able to explain the meaning of the dream. He told him that Patara himself had appeared to him, and that the seven stars were quite different from all other stars because they did not twinkle, but remained still in the Heavens; and as they chose their own season for appearing, no one could tell for certain without their help when the new plant was to be put into the ground. The friend, being also versed in the Law of the Spirits, said

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that the plant found in the roots of the tree was a padi (rice) plant, and that Patara had taken the trouble to reveal this in a dream.

The man went home, and picked up the plant from the corner of his hut, and he put it away and cherished it until another dream should tell him when to look for the seven stars. In due time, with the guidance of Patara, the man noticed the "Necklace of Pleiades" appearing in the sky. The little plant was then put in the ground, where it grew and grew and multiplied into many so that padi flourished all over the country, and the people of Sarawak from that day until now have had enough to eat.

The Dyaks believe that there are certain classes of Spirits that are omnivorous and wander all about the country. These Spirits are called Antu Gargasi, and they are of gigantic stature, and bring sickness into the place for the simple reason that they are hungry and want to devour mankind. To avoid the advent of these Spirits into the house or the village, the people erect either one or two little huts on the side of the road leading to their homes. In these huts they place ample offerings, and flags are hoisted on the roofs of them. It is believed that when the Spirits see the flags they understand at once that the people in the house or in the village submit to them, and that they have offerings for them in the huts. The Spirits then ascend into the huts, and eat the offerings, and return the same way as they came.

There is a Dyak Feast called Gwaai Burong,

Nikau ka Burong . . . or Mri ka Burong Makai (meaning the Feeding of the Omen Birds). This feast comes under the heading of Sandau Hari (meaning to last for half a day only), and those that take part in it will be lucky in the taking of heads.

Dyaks when on the war-path depend on omens and dreams to reveal to them the results. The omen birds are supposed to be the relatives of Singalang Burong, to whom, in order to gain favour, they must pay their respects. Fairy gods and goddesses usually appear to them in a vision, and when they do appear, a feast is held in order to show their gratitude for the vision, and offerings and sacrifices are made to them. After a dream of this kind a short meeting is held in the Ruai, or reception room of the house, and after a great deal of eating and drinking everyone retires to the outside platform, or Tanju as it is called.

Here mats are spread, and awnings and blankets are put up. Offerings are prepared, and a live pig is bound, ready to be slaughtered for a sacrifice to propitiate the deities. Then all that are present sit down, arranging themselves according to their position in Dyak society . . . and the drums are beaten loudly from time to time. When this has ceased an elderly man of very good position proceeds to offer up the sacrifice, using the finest Dyak poetry to invoke the aid of the deities, and begging them to turn their faces towards them and to listen to their prayers. The pig is then killed, and its liver examined for signs of good or bad

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fortune in the days to come. Then comes the feeding of the omen birds, or Mri ka Burong Makai . . . the man who rehearses the prayers standing upright on the edge of the platform dressed in the garb of a Hadji from Mecca, and holding in his left hand a plate filled with yellow rice. Looking up to the Heavens he scatters the rice with his other hand as he repeats his prayers. This lengthy oration having concluded, the Pepat is again sounded on the drums and is kept up until a kite appears in the Heavens, when it ceases. Hours may pass before this kite is seen, and as soon as the bird appears in the skies everyone rises, and the feast is at an end.

This may mean little to us . . . this simple ceremony of homage to the omen birds, but to them it is of the utmost and greatest solemnity. A grain of rice, an invocation, a sacrificed pig, and the hearts of these savage tribes are soothed, and their minds at rest. Watching the skies for a certain bird to appear . . . beating their drums, and murmuring their prayers, all in a setting of jungle trees, and bright jungle grasses, with the shadow of their long-house reflected on their smooth brown skins.

Now there is a Dyak custom called Nampok, or going to a solitary place. There are two uses for this Nampok, one in which the Dyaks seek to be made brave, and the other in order to discover a cure for ailments, but this latter is practised only when the person who is suffering is beyond all human aid. The idea is a religious one, the person practising it betaking himself to some solitary place

on the mountains and hills, or by the rivers, or even in a cemetery, or wherever there is any probability of meeting with the Spirits. Some unfortunates have been known to have visited a dozen places and yet never had the chance of meeting a single Antu or Spirit. The undertaking is said to be dangerous and to require considerable pluck and self-control, because the Spirits may either appear in person, or else in visions, and may take on themselves the forms of animals, or reptiles in hideous shapes, in order to frighten those who are in watch for them.

Should the Dyak give way to fright, and run from them, he suffers death. But if he has control of himself he obtains his desire, and the Spirits finally appear before him in human form, bestowing kindly and caressing looks upon him.

The offering with which the Spirits are approached must needs be a stolen offering from other people, and no one is allowed to know when a person has gone Nampok.

A few years ago an old man went Nampok in the cemetery. The first night he was unvisited by the Spirits, but on the second night the Koklir, who is a ferocious female Spirit, appeared to him, and he ran for his life. This man lived for many years, but his crops died, and all his family died, and his house was burned to the ground. Every time he endeavoured to rebuild his house, something happened to him, so that he was obliged to move and move again. Now, had he not run away from the Koklir Spirit, all would have been

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well with him. It was the curse of the broken Nampok.

Once when I was travelling through the Dyak country I saw by the side of the road some piled-up heaps of twigs, and I noticed that as the Dyaks passed they added to these heaps, collecting various twigs as they went along. I asked the Raja what the meaning of this was, and he told me that these heaps were called the Tudong Bula, or, as generally translated, the Liars' Mounds, and unless the Dyaks added to them as they passed, they would bring a curse upon themselves and upon their families.

I have dwelt somewhat lengthily upon these Dyak tribes, because once seen they are never to be forgotten. They sink into your blood and remain there, they are a drug almost that cannot be left alone. When I close my eyes I can see the little Dyak girls, so contented in their lot. I can see their graceful, warm brown bodies, and hear the music of many bells upon their wrists. Brown-skinned, dark-eyed children whose laughter echoes from the river. . . . Immature mothers with babies in their arms. . . . Dyak warriors dancing upon the green grass, and the strange full-throated melody of their incantations to their gods.

The Dyaks do not fear their Raja, they have no thought that he might tire of their presence. They are like persistent bees that hover round some favourite flower. Even in the silence of your own house you are not free of them. Inquisitive eyes gaze in from every window . . . the shuffle of their



naked feet outside your door. Whispers and laughter follow you everywhere. They squat upon your floor, chewing their betel nut, and oft-times drinking gin and singing songs. It is impossible to be angry with them, they are so naturally, so charmingly sincere. They want to see how the White Tuans live, and they want to talk and to laugh, and to make fun. A love of living is theirs, unspoilt as yet by the hands of civilization. The little Dyak girls are beautiful and slim and supple, but they have an early fullness of figure, a quaint matureness that makes you realize that these children of twelve are in reality women. Their eyes hold promises, and their little shy manners are suggestive and full of grace. They are not embarrassed by their nakedness, and their small brown breasts are beautiful and firm. They age easily and quickly. The span of their youth and of their beauty is not wide. Mothers at the age of thirteen, they quickly lose their grace, and their little faces pucker with anxiety and care. They soon become drudges in the house, feeding their menfolk and tending to their young. There is no time for play . . . for they are wives and mothers when they should have been playing in the fields.

One of the greatest menaces of Sarawak is the crocodile, for women are taken washing by the sides of the rivers, and little children are flung out of their boats and devoured. The smallest crocodile that has ever haunted the narrower streams has been about nine feet long, and the two largest reptiles that I have ever heard of in my time have

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been fourteen and twenty feet long respectively. Inside one of these immense creatures the remains of two Dyaks were found—a woman and a man—and in both cases the bodies had been swallowed whole.

The reason why a crocodile will very seldom devour a Dyak is supposed to be related in an ancient legend. A Dyak invited a crocodile to stay in his house. The crocodile became the guest of the Dyak and made such an excellent companion that the Dyak thought it would be advantageous to himself to offer his daughter in marriage to the reptile. Very soon after this the crocodile became the Dyak's son-in-law, and, as was the custom amongst the tribe, entered his father-in-law's family permanently. For this he was supposed to reward him by helping him on the farm and in the house. But the Dyak soon had cause to repent the marriage he had arranged, for the crocodile would not work in the house, neither would he work upon the farm. He would not go fishing, and he would not go into the jungle to collect wood. All he would do was bask in the sun, and he would only enter the house when it was time to eat. Indeed, he ate so much that very soon the Dyak's whole store of corn had been consumed, and all the rice that he had been laying up for months. Not only that; the crocodile would go into the Bazaar and run into debt with the neighbours, forcing them by threats to lend him money, opening his mighty jaws and showing them his teeth. Matters became so desperate with the Dyak that one day the whole

family lay in wait for the crocodile. They caught him unawares and hacked him to pieces. The news of the crocodile's fate soon spread to all his relations, and they were so shamed by the ungrateful conduct of one of their own blood that to this day they will not look a Dyak in the face.

There is a rival legend about a Dyak who, whilst walking beside the Sarawak river, came upon some crocodiles lying on a mud-bank, apparently in great distress. It appeared that a brother was on the point of death, and the crocodiles knew of no medicine that would cure him. They begged and implored the Dyak to go with them to the house and save the sick reptile. They told him that they would let him select any one of their treasures in their house if only he would go with them. Flattered by their confidence in him, and lured by the thought of the treasure he would choose, the Dyak went down on the crocodile's back into the house of his sick brother. The house was built in a hole in the rock, and it was a decent and very comfortable house. The sick reptile was stretched on his back in the middle of the floor, and on the point of drawing his last breath. The Dyak ordered him to open his mouth, and when he had done so he put his hand right down the crocodile's throat and brought up the leg of a Malay still covered with a very dirty portion of trouser. It was this leg and this dirty portion of trouser that had been almost strangling the unfortunate crocodile. As soon as it was removed the cure was complete. The thanks of the crocodiles was both sincere and profuse, but

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all the while they were thanking him there was no mention made of the treasure they had promised, or of any tangible reward. At length the Dyak could bear it no longer, and he made some mention of the riches they had assured him they possessed. The crocodiles turned upon him and told him abruptly that the treasures did not exist. "You ought to be thankful," they said, "that we have not devoured you. Surely it is reward enough that you are still alive?"

He was then commanded to mount the back of his deceiving guide who set him ashore, angry, and wet and dirty, and mortally afraid. The crocodile laughed in his face, and then dived into the water again and was gone. But from that day to this the crocodiles have always run away whenever they set eyes upon a Dyak, lest the debt of honour incurred should be demanded of them.

Now the story that I am about to tell is a story of coincidence, unbelievable maybe to those who do not admit that happenings can and do often fit into a slot, as if they had been destined years before. I myself have always thought that our lives run on little rails that meet in the end the things that God intended.

In Sarawak there was a certain Mohammedan family I knew whose business it was to mark down and trap crocodiles. These crocodile-trappers are extraordinarily able at their craft, and this ability is handed down from father to son and from generation to generation. They are very proud of the tradition that runs through their blood—"Once a

crocodile-catcher, always a crocodile-catcher." It is, indeed, considered a disgrace if any member of such a family deserts the profession of his forefathers. The ordinary Malays do not acknowledge these families, they say that they have been given over to Iblis, which is Satan. They say that a catcher will never prosper, that there is a curse upon him, and it certainly is a strange fact that in spite of the demand for these catchers, and the reward they receive for their services, they always seem to be very poor.

In this particular family the father was too old to maintain his power over the crocodiles, so he had handed his profession over to his son. They were very charming people, untouched and unspoilt, like patches of genuine old jungle. The son, Abang Hassan, was small, and slim, and kind-eyed. He was a dreamer, and very simple in his ways. He was not rich, and his insufficient store-room was filled with fishing-nets and tackle; in fact, to enter his house was to reveal the secret of his trade. He loved the sea, and the rivers, and the life that he lived along the coast. He had no desire to be big in possession as long as he had his plate full of rice and dried prawns. It was only at rare intervals that he would allow himself and his family to have prawns, for as a rule he would sell them in the Bazaar, and catch some river fish that had not the flavour, it was true, but served as a nutritious, though somewhat tasteless meal.

Abang Hassan lived in a house thatched with dried palm-leaves and perched on the bank of a

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small river. Round and about him there were pieces of land planted with palm trees and jungle fruit. Coconuts were scarce, but he had no interest in what the land could produce; his heart and soul was in the inheritance that had come to him, and he had only eyes that could probe the depths of the brown mud waters, and hands that could draw these fearsome reptiles from the stream.

Abang Hassan guarded the secret of crocodile-hunting as jealously as he guarded his little family from the outer world. His children played naked upon the river banks, and he was unafraid because he knew that he could sense when a crocodile was near. All that he taught his children was the noise of the insects, and the songs of the birds, and the cries of the jungle animals. Their minds were full of dreamy contemplation, and their little bodies were stuffed with rice and fish. They were of no particular intellect, and could not have made their way in any town. Simple they were, and charming, and I would spend many evenings listening to the tales of Abang Hassan and his river prey. I asked them once if they were not lonely, as they mixed so seldom with the outer world, and Abang Hassan would reply, "Have I not the secret of my father and of his father before him? . . . Do I not hold the riddle of the river so that even the reptiles fear me? How then could I possibly be lonely?"

Abang Hassan's wife had been a lovely little Malay girl whose morals had been wayward, for she had run away from him and he had never

heard where she had gone. He never spoke of her to me, but he seemed always to be listening and watching, as if he half expected to hear the jangle of her bracelets, and the sound of her coming towards him once again. He never seemed to lose faith, and afterwards he told me that he had always been sure that he would find her. "Flowers do not always bloom in the same place every year," he would say. "Sometimes they are blown by the wind across the jungle trees."

We all wished that Abang Hassan could find his wife, for he was very popular in the Kampong where he lived.

Then came a rumour that a man-eating crocodile had invaded one of the smaller branches of the river near by. This crocodile was a foul and fearsome beast that everybody fled from. Whispered tales trembled in the little Kampong, of how strong men had been flung from their boats and devoured; how an old Malay fisherman, washing his face by the water's edge, had been caught by the ears and dragged into the water; how little children had been snapped up whilst bathing by the banks, and women had been taken in the midst of washing their clothes. It was horrible, so they said, this weird, corrupt, and flesh-eating monster, and there was not a living soul in the whole Kampong who was not afraid of it.

Of course, the moment this man-eating crocodile was rumoured to have its home in one of the smaller branches of the river, Abang Hassan was sent for, and I happened to hear which night it was that he

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was setting forth to trap it. Here was a chance, I said to myself, to see this amazing happening. I knew that with him there was not the slightest danger—not really—although the thought of it gave me a little feeling of hesitating fear.

Abang Hassan received the news that I was joining the expedition with the immobility peculiar to Malays. I really do believe if I said to a Malay, "I am going to walk into the river this evening and drown," he would bow his head in that gentle courteous way they have, and reply, "Baik, tuan Ranee." Which, on being translated literally means, "Very well, Mr Ranee"—a title they themselves have bestowed upon me.

The night that Abang Hassan selected was profoundly dark. No moon, no stars. The little common loftus lamp swung bravely in the front of our prahu (boat). I asked Abang Hassan why we were in so small a prahu, and he replied the reason was that it would make no noise. We seemed to be floating along upon a raft of slender wood; one whisk of a crocodile's tail and I knew we would be lost. We had a Kamudi, or middle man, with us as well as Abang Hassan in the bows. The beetles were singing; it was really and truly wonderful this heavenly scented air, and the song of the love-sick beetles. "Surely this is the most divine thing I have ever done," I said to myself. There could not be anywhere a sensation more perfect and more unspoilt than this. The crouching figure of Abang Hassan, with his slim figure and his slim brown wrists, and close to him the stolid rigidity of the



Kamudi, whose face was mask-like, and who had no personality at all.

Leaning forward in the little boat I watched our lantern. I felt as if our whole lives depended on its flame. The inadequacy of the boat, the darkness of the night, and the size of the monster we were about to catch all seemed out of proportion, like a nightmare dream.

Then Abang Hassan began very quietly to take out the harpoon. This was a heavy steel weapon with a socket in which a pole, from eight to ten feet in length, was loosely inserted. The line was of rattan, and anything up to sixty feet in length. This was attached to the shaft of the harpoon in such a manner that it would not come off under any conditions whatever.

We left the main river and turned into a stream of perfect blackness. I do not remember ever having been out on such a night as this. It was as if the darkness folded itself about our bodies like a soft and suffocating cloak. The immense silence of the mango swamps was broken by the lapping of our little prahu. The jungle trees I loved so much by day assumed, so it appeared to me, the most grotesque proportions by night. I seemed to see in every shadow near the banks some hideous, hidden foe. Logs of wood drifted with the tide, thudding and scraping against us as they passed us by. Abang Hassan, completely unconcerned, was busy with his harpoon, the Kamudi might have been an automaton, so still was he. At intervals Abang Hassan would sweep

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the water with his lantern, his sad brown eyes concentrated on the shaft of light that trembled on the tide.

Crocodiles at night are, as a rule, floating in such a position that the head is on the top of the water and the rest of the body hanging practically at right angles to the head. Thus it lies and waits for fish, and so it was that we came upon our prey.

Have you ever tried with a dog or a rabbit to show up the eyeballs at night by the reflector of a lamp? If you have, it will give you an idea of what the crocodile's eyeballs looked like floating apparently bodiless on the surface of those darkened waters, and from quite natural nervousness I was suddenly plunged into unimaginable fear. The little prahu seemed to me no more secure than a leaf that had been cast upon the river. I tried to attract the attention of the Kamudi, to tell him to force Abang Hassan to return from whence we had come, but even if I had been permitted to speak I doubt if either of those two men would have obeyed me. The blood of the catcher had risen, and the glory of combat was his. Here was a prize worth risking a life for, and the desire to prove that his achievement was better than his father's turned Abang Hassan from the gentle, dreamy fisherman, into a crouching, waiting beast. In dead silence, with no click even from the paddles, we drifted towards those glistening, evil eyes. We dared not even whisper. Then Abang Hassan made ready to strike. Suppose he should miss? Suppose we upset in mid-stream, what chance should we have

against those mighty jaws? I pictured myself endeavouring to swim, floundering and gasping for breath. In imagination I could already feel myself torn and lacerated, dragged down below into the mud and slowly devoured.

Abang Hassan, still seated, was gently scraping the port or starboard bow to indicate to the Kamudi on which side of the reptile he wished to get broadside. This, by-the-by, is essential, since the best place to strike at a crocodile is in the back of the neck. Here the skin is valueless and softer than the back that is protected by its so-called "buttons." Then, having gained the proper distance, Abang Hassan rose, and with a fearful jab drove the harpoon home, pulled out the pole, and calmly waited.

Down sank the crocodile, and it was then that I realized what it meant to be a famous catcher. Up-river went the crocodile at a terrific pace with Abang Hassan playing his line as peacefully as if it was just an ordinary fish trapped at the other end of it. Our little prahu rocked to and fro, and the river became a mass of whirling rings and ripples. Then, quite suddenly, the upheaval ended. The crocodile lay sulking and skulking on the river bed.

It did not take long for Abang Hassan to pull it up, and how terrifying it looked as it rose to the surface with widely open jaws. Abang Hassan and the Kamudi shouted for joy. The reward was theirs, and the man-eating crocodile was trapped.

But that is not the end of my story. When we got back to Kuching and the huge reptile was landed and trussed up, ready to be slain, Abang

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Hassan stood by and helped to drive in the final death-blow. Now there are certain ceremonies that take place during the cutting-open of a crocodile, and crowds gather round to watch and see how much jewellery there is within the beast, and how many balls of human hair—hair never digests, however long it has been consumed. I shall never forget the cry that Abang Hassan gave when he saw two small bracelets linked together lying in the belly of the crocodile, for those two bracelets he himself had given to his wife only seven days before she disappeared.

The skin was cut up, and Abang Hassan gave me the best parts of it to have made into a hand-bag and a belt, but always when I take them out I think of the little Malay with his puckered, puzzled face, and the soft brown eyes, who went out with me on that night and killed with his own hands the murderer of his wife.

That is why I have always said that the East is sweet maybe, but bitter sweet, and that beneath this land of gorgeous greens and lazy flowers there is cruelty unimaginable.

Dyak children's ears are perforated when they are only six months old, and from that day the hole is forcibly increased in size until the lobe of the ear forms a loop from about one to four inches long. At first wooden pegs are placed in the hole; these, after a time, are replaced by a couple of tin or brass rings. Those of them who are too poor to purchase rings use a rolled-up leaf in place of

them. Gradually the weight is increased by the addition of other and larger rings, until the lobe of the ear sometimes gives way under the strain and splits in half. There is a legend attaching to these wooden pegs that the Dyaks wear in their ears, which tells something like this :

Before the first White Raja came to our country, the Malays did many wicked things. In the time of long ago, a Malay once trapped a crocodile, and the way that he caught this reptile was treacherous and cruel. He tied a dog to a wooden hook that was attached to a long piece of rattan which he fastened to a tree, leaving its loose end floating on the river. The dog howled and attracted a hungry crocodile, who swam hastily to the spot, and in spite of the warnings of his friend the alligator bird, he snapped viciously at the bait, and swallowed the dog and the hook at one gulp. The hook fixed itself in the crocodile's throat, just as the Malay had intended, and the reptile could neither swallow the hook nor could he spit it up, and therefore his jaw was prized open. The Malay, seeing the loose end of the rattan floating down the river, paddled after it, but the reptile was too quick for him and swam away from the country near the sea to the country of the Land Dyaks who lived more in the interior. A member of Pa Banjak's tribe, passing by in a canoe, noticed the crocodile's open jaw and felt sorry for him. The crocodile begged the Dyak to put his arm down his throat and wrench the hook away. Thinking it might be dangerous, the Dyak did not appre-

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ciate the task, and enquired what the crocodile would do for him in return. "I promise never to attack or eat any member of your tribe," replied the crocodile, and the Dyak, thinking this a fair enough offer, removed the hook. The crocodile thanked his deliverer, and told him to warn all his tribe that they should thrust wooden discs into the cartilage of their ears, so that all crocodiles should know them and not mistake them for members of some other tribe. And to this day the Dyaks with discs in their ears fervently believe that they are the friends of all the crocodiles in the rivers round and about where they dwell.

Some of the Dyak warriors file their teeth into sharp points and stain them with betel juice which tinges the saliva and the lips a brilliant red. The blackening of their teeth is produced by rubbing in burnt coconut shell pounded up with oil and held over a hot fire until a dark resinous juice exudes. This juice is collected and, while still warm, is spread thickly over the teeth. When dry it is like a firm coat of enamel or varnish that covers and protects the nerves.

The Kayan women are beautifully tattooed upon their arms from the elbows to the utmost point of the fingers, and their legs from the thighs to a little below the knees, and also upon the upper part of the feet. Sometimes when they are bathing they have the appearance of wearing long blue-black stockings and lace-work mittens upon their arms.

As soon as it is known that a woman is with child

the most amazing restrictions come immediately into force. These restrictions are binding upon the husband as well as upon the wife. For instance, it is forbidden them to cut off creepers that hang over the water or over the road, lest the mother should suffer from hæmorrhage after the delivery. It is forbidden to dam a stream, or to make the broad plaiting for the hilt of a Parang, or to set up a dam for the fish-trap (Bubu), or to drive a nail into a board, lest the woman should have difficulty in delivery. It is forbidden to pour out oil, lest the child should suffer from inflammation of the ears (Tuli). . . . It is forbidden to fix the Parang in its hilt, lest the child should be born deaf. It is forbidden to break an egg, lest the child should be born blind, or to plant a banana plant, lest the head of the child should be large. . . . It is forbidden to burn the wood of the ficus to warm oneself, lest the child should be born dumb; or to kill any animal, lest the child should be deformed and the nose should bleed. It is forbidden to scrape smooth the shell of a coconut, lest the child's hair should not grow; or to bring a fresh turtle into the room, lest the child should not be born; or to dye anything black, lest the child should be born black.

If a woman goes out anywhere she must return the same way so that the child should not know how it has been delivered. The woman may not eat anything within a mosquito-curtain, lest the child should be stillborn. The woman may not lift up a stone and carry it, lest the child should be born paralysed of limb.

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There are a million other restrictions which are not worthy of mention, but the strange part of it is that in the case of nearly all these restrictions these natives are clever enough and cunning enough in thinking out ways to circumvent them so that they should not bear any ill effects upon their family.

The whole period of a woman's pregnancy is passed in the deepest anxiety and fear lest the Spirits (Antus) may assault her and her innocent babe. An ill dream or a small accident such as a fall is considered a portent signifying coming danger during her delivery, and therefore a sacrifice of a fowl must invariably be made. How many times I have heard one woman talking to another and telling how many fowls have been killed in order to save her during pregnancy.

When the time of delivery is at hand two or three midwives are called to her assistance to accelerate the birth of the child. Nature is not allowed to pursue its own course, but force is applied, sometimes by the tying of a rope about her middle and the midwives pulling it tighter by degrees; and sometimes by the explosion of a bamboo cracker beneath the couch where the wretched woman lies. As soon as the child appears in the world a signal is given by beating a bamboo receptacle with a stick, or a brass gong is struck, or maybe a gun is fired to announce that a child has been born into the house. Immediately there follows a religious ceremony, a fowl being waved over the heads of all those present, including the infant and its mother.



The fowl is then killed, and the blood is smeared on the foreheads of all who are assembled.

The woman is not allowed to sleep for twenty-four hours after having given birth to her child, nor is she even allowed to lie down. In several cases a woman will go out into the padi fields to work three days after her confinement. Is it surprising that they lose their looks? . . . Is it surprising that they grow old before their time? Primitive childbirth . . . primitive prayers in these jungle homesteads, miles and miles away from the smallest town.

In the days of James Brooke the Dyaks did not know how to assist a woman when she was in travail, consequently many crude and somewhat brutal practices were adopted. The story is told of how the knowledge first came to be possessed by a certain man named Kelili Resa who went out into the jungle one day with his blow-pipe to hunt for the wild deer or the pig. Deep, deep into the jungle he crept, and the trees enfolded him and concealed his slim brown body from view. He made no sound with his naked feet, and he turned aside the branches and weeds with soft and careful hands. Presently he came upon a gigantic Maias (Orang-Utang), who was assisting the female at the birth of its young. Kelili Resa noticed that the Maias used Lia (ginger), and also bandages of leaves. Afterwards when his own wife gave birth to a child, he was able to assist her in the same way as the Maias did, and it was from this red-haired gorilla that the first knowledge of

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cleanliness and care spread amongst the natives of Sarawak.

When a Dyak woman gives birth to a child, it is forbidden to eat prawns in the house, lest the child should be a coward when he is on the war-path. . . . It is also forbidden to eat eggs, lest the child should have sores upon his head. Pork can only be eaten when the child begins to suck or bite his toe. It is forbidden to thresh cotton in the house or in the village, lest the mother should feel stiff . . . or to prepare a kind of lily for thread, lest the mother should feel crazy. . . . It is forbidden to suckle the child lying down, lest the child should be deaf . . . or to suckle the child whilst bathing, lest the child should have bad teeth. . . . And last of all, it is forbidden to eat sugar-cane, lest the mother should too frequently give birth.

For the various kinds of sicknesses which attack them, the Dyaks use herbs and plants as remedies. The efficacy of these various herbs has been discovered by experiment, and I tremble to think how many of their families and friends have suffered in the finding of these cures.

The Malays assert that there are several ways of securing immunity from serious wounds. In the first place, the body can become hard enough, so they say, to be impenetrable to weapons and even impervious to decay after death. This peculiar hardness can be attained by any person born with a complete caul. They also believe that protection can be secured against all but superficial

wounds if sufficient mercury be rubbed into the body, the theory being that the pressure of a weapon or missile against the skin would cause the quicksilver to rush to the point of the impact, and so prevent any deep penetration. Some Malays can make their bodies so slippery that any weapon will glide off and leave them unharmed. They can render their bodies hard by fasting, and by the prolonged use of appropriate prayers. To procure invulnerability, Dyaks and other tribes use every kind of charm and talisman, such as the material of wild pigs' nests, which they will sling about their waists. The belief of these people in specifics of such repute has filled the pockets of many an unscrupulous medicine-man. When I think of the ingredients used in some of the lotions and medicines used by the Malays, it amazes me that the death-rate is of so low an average. For instance, Paha Apong, which is the rotting stem of the Nippa Palm found floating in a stream, they will dry and grind into a fine powder, applying it to a sore or a cut. Taun Tebal Besi, pounded and mixed with the raw white of an egg, is made into a paste and applied to any wound. In a case of violent hæmorrhage, a mixture of yellow clay and water is made into a liquid paste and poured into the wound; should this not prove quite successful, however, the nails of the patient are then scraped and the scraping applied to the wound, which is then tightly bound up so that no air can get to it. A paste of sugar and soap is also said to be most effective in the treatment of septic wounds; Sea

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Dyaks and Land Dyaks very commonly use ordinary tobacco for plugging wounds and stopping hæmorrhage.

The Chinese sell a dusty-looking powder to staunch the bleeding of wounds, and this powder is called Ngeh Joong. They will not reveal the nature of the preparation, but an examination of it has shown that it contains vegetable extract. Spider-webs are also much used by the Chinese for applying to their sores and wounds.

The Dyak doctors, whether male or female, are called Dukun, and some of their medicines they have obtained through the medium of dreams. For instance, there was once a woman called Kumbau who suffered from a very obstinate ulcer. The Dukun used various kinds of ointments, but they were of no avail. One night Kumbau had a dream in which a living person told her to use such and such a compound and she would be cured. The next day this mixture was made up for her, and sure enough in a short time she was cured. There was a schoolboy called Benjamine who suffered continually from asthma. When the attack came, he would be unable to lie down for three days and three nights, and he was a pitiable sight to those round and about him. The doctor in Kuching sent two kinds of drugs, including chlorodyne, but none of these medicines seemed to be of the slightest use. One night, during an attack, the boy was visited by a vision. His great-grandfather, whom he had never seen, as he had died a long time ago, came to him and sympathized with him, and

directed him to take a certain stone, dip it in a cup with a little water and, after rubbing the stone in the cup, to drink the water. The following morning the boy did as the vision had told him, and he never had an attack of asthma again.

Another man in Klasang, called Chandang, suffered from chronic dysentery and was at death's door. One night he had a dream that a certain person, unknown to him and very old, visited him and told him to take a kind of lily called Lepus, and to pound a very small spray, break it, and dip it into a little cup called Mangkok Batu, containing water. When this was done, he was to place the cup on his navel, and let it rest there. The man did as the dream instructed him, and he was cured on the following day.

The Raja asked one of these Dyaks whether he could feel any reaction from the little cup, and the Dyak replied that the coolness of it was like ice, and seemed to enter deep into his body.

There is not a herb or a weed that the medicine-men of Sarawak have not tested and tried, and the natives believe in these men, who obtain a strange hold over their patients. There are lilies called Chekur and Jerangan that they use and say are the most effective "Wind Medicines." The young shoots of a fern called Kerniong when pounded will make into a poultice for most ills. I knew a man who had been stung by a scorpion . . . he killed it, and took out the brain of it, and applied it to the wound. . . . This antidote undoubtedly saved his life.

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I asked some of the Dyaks why their medicine-men impressed them so much, and for what reason they seemed to be afraid of them, and it was then that they told me the Legend of the Medicine-Man called Gagak who put a warning curse upon all the animals of their land.

Once upon a time a medicine-man called Gagak held a meeting of all the animals: the Sambur Deer, the Wild Pig, the Barking Deer, the Mouse-Deer, the Binturong, the Bear, the Black Monkey, the Pig-Tailed Monkey, the Spider Monkey, the Leopard Cat, the Civet Cat, the Squirrel, and the domestic cat.

As soon as a large number of animals had gathered together, Manang Gagak addressed the meeting thus: "It is my purpose," said he, "to invite you to agree to make farms. All you animals have done wrong by constantly eating our padi."

"Very well," grunted the Pig, who was entitled The Verandah of the Birdscarer's Hut, "I will."

"I will," said the Deer, who was entitled The Distant Booming of Thunder.

"And I will," barked the Muntjac Deer, who was entitled The Deep Gash Made by the Deadly Bamboo Spear that was Set by Man.

"And I will," said the Mouse-Deer, who was entitled The Parasite that Harbours Where it Will.

"So will I," purred the Leopard, who was entitled The Blanket Woven by the Daughter of Puyu Berujan.

"And I," growled the Bear, who was entitled

The Axe that Has Not been Used for Cutting out Boats.

"And I also," snarled the Paradoxurus, who was entitled The Blue Thread that Lulong Used to Ornament the Hem of her Jacket.

"I will," screeched the Black Monkey, who chattered incessantly like the bugle sounding during gun-drill.

"And I will," jabbered the Pig-Tailed Monkey, who, when in company with others, made a noise like a large army taking fright.

Then the animals asked what kind of work was needed to make a padi farm, and the Manang Gagak spoke and told them of what had to be done to make such a farm.

"First of all," he said, "we must look for the land, and when that is obtained we must consult the omens. Then comes the preliminary clearing, and then the ordinary clearing, the felling of trees, the burning, and sowing of the seed; the weeding, and reaping, and thrashing, and drying, and pounding and winnowing, and cooking—and then it can be eaten."

The animals looked at one another; they looked at Manang Gagak; then they lowered their eyes and spoke.

"It cannot be done," said the Pig. "I would much rather invite my friends to root up the ground."

"And I likewise," said the Deer. "It is much more pleasant for me to take my people to search for the pasture."

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"And I also," said the Barking Deer. "It is far better for me to clear the stem of the Lengkam."

"I will not farm," said the Bear. "It is much better for me to rear bees that will produce honey."

"Nor I," said the Mouse-Deer. "It is very much nicer for me to wait for the Buan fruit to drop."

"I certainly will not farm," said the clouded Leopard. "It is very much nicer to live upon my neighbours."

"I also do not intend to farm," quoth the Paradoxurus. "It is more convenient to search for the nests of the Sengayan birds."

"Indeed I will not farm," jabbered the Grey Monkey. "I can feed myself on the pith of the Senggang Senganan."

"My friends will not farm," said the Black Monkey as he kept on skinning the Brangan fruit.

"I also will not farm," chattered the Squirrel, who depended upon the blossoms of the wild Pinang tree.

"Very well," replied Manang Gagak; "if that is the general wish of all you animals and you will not farm, let it be so. But if you, Pig, taste our padi, you shall meet your death from the pig-traps round and about your drinking-haunt. If you eat our padi you shall be ensnared by the Rotan snare. If you, Mouse-Deer, eat our sweet potatoes, you shall be caught up in a trap baited with Buan fruit. If you, Barking Deer, eat our Casava, you also shall meet your death in a trap."

It is these warning words of Manang Gagak that



have been handed down amongst the animals of the jungle from generation to generation, and the fear of their drinking-places at certain times of the day. If ever you see a Wild Pig creeping to the edge of the pool, you will know that he has stolen the padi from some farm; and if ever you see the Mouse-Deer bounding across the open spaces, you will know that he dare not enter the jungle because of the traps that may be waiting for him. The Dyaks respect the fear of all the animals, and the power of the curse of Manang Gagak.

To set pig-traps is one of the Dyaks' greatest diversions in the field, and it is executed with good omens of a special kind, and even good dreams are not excluded in the transaction. There are two kinds of pig-traps—Peti Ngelanchar and Peti Panga. These traps are very powerful and seldom miss the vital parts of a pig. They are carefully set and measured, and these measures are handsomely decorated with the figures of men sitting on the tops of them. The Dyaks go out in companies to set traps in the places where wild pigs are plentiful. Several hundred of these traps are set, and on the seventh day they visit them, and bring the carcasses of the wild pig home. Every morning enquiries are made about the dreams they have had. The craving for success and the fear of mishap is such that they cannot go forth to set their traps without their proper dreams.

The Raja and I were once present at a Dyak burial ceremony, and I have never forgotten the

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scene that unrolled before our eyes. First there was the Baya, a collection of things that are given to a person who is deceased. These things are either buried with him or placed upon his grave. The Baya consists of things that had once belonged to the deceased, and also the gifts he had received during his lifetime.

Whilst the man was about to breathe his last breath the Baya was immediately put aside for him. Friends and relations who had come to see him die, contributed to it, but as soon as life was extinct, it became taboo for anyone living to add to it again.

The moment the man died, his mouth and eyes were closed by some near relation, either by his wife or by his child. The corpse was then washed and clothed and raw rice was sprinkled on his chest. He was then taken out to the covered verandah of the house or Ruai, as it is called, with the mat upon which he had died, and he was carefully walled round with home-made blankets, or Pua Kumbu mats. All the women entered the enclosure and surrounded the corpse and wailed at the tops of their voices. The Baya was taken out of the room and it was put on a little hearth in the passage of the house with a light on it, some raw rice, and a live fowl. If the coffin was to be taken up to the house, then two live fowls were required for propitiation.

The lamentation of the women whilst watching the corpse was by no means deficient in poetry. It was, indeed, exceedingly striking and most heart-rending to listen to. Everyone recalled the losses

they had themselves suffered, and entreated the dead and the Spirits to take them also. Their dirges ran thus: "Adopt me, O Spirit, and take me to the cemetery at the river called Pedalai. Lift me up, whirlwind, to the highest parts of Heaven."

For a few hours only the corpse was allowed to be in the house, unless the death had taken place at night, when a longer time was permitted. With the Dyaks, immediately a person is dead he must be separated from the living. A dead man is called a Spirit, or Antu, and is of the greatest danger to the living.

We watched the corpse being taken to the cemetery with the Baya, a live fowl, and some raw rice, and a cooking-pot. At the edge of the cemetery some halted with the fowl, and the raw rice, and the cooking-pot, whilst the rest quickly proceeded into the cemetery, bearing the corpse and the Baya. Those who had stopped outside the cemetery began to kill the fowl and to cook the rice. Only the blood of the fowl was put into a bamboo for the purpose of propitiation.

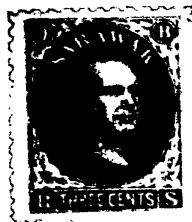
After everybody had eaten and had touched the toe of their foot, they proceeded to the cemetery to make the grave. On the ground where the grave was to be dug some raw rice had to be sprinkled. The interring of the dead was executed with the greatest haste for fear of a bad omen. Much care was taken that no green leaves should fall into the grave, for fear that the dead man should be offended and haunt them for the rest of

### THE THREE WHITE RAJAS

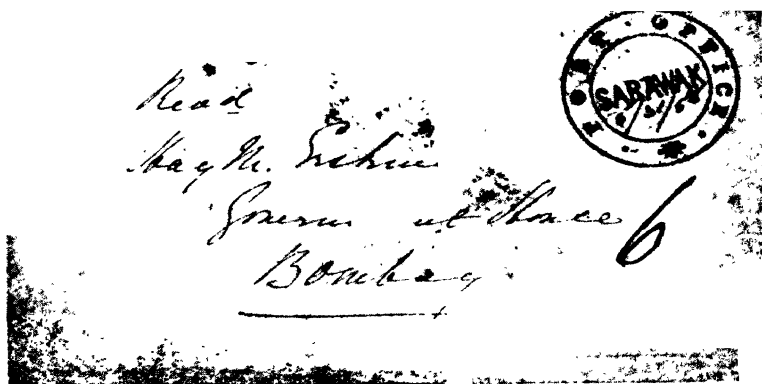
their days. On the return home all of them cut hooks out of the branches of the trees, and placed them on their shoulders. This signified that the hooks would keep the soul back from wandering about in Hades. As soon as the halting-place was reached at the edge of the cemetery, the propitiation of touching the toes with the blood of the fowl began. They all partook of the rice and the fowl, and then everybody threw away their wooden hook.

The driving in of a piece of wood at the edge of the cemetery by the last man in the procession signified a barrier between the living and the dead, and a barrier between Hades and this world. The raw rice that had first been sprinkled on the ground where the grave was to be dug was to compensate the earth, or rather to compensate Pulang Gana, the god of the earth.

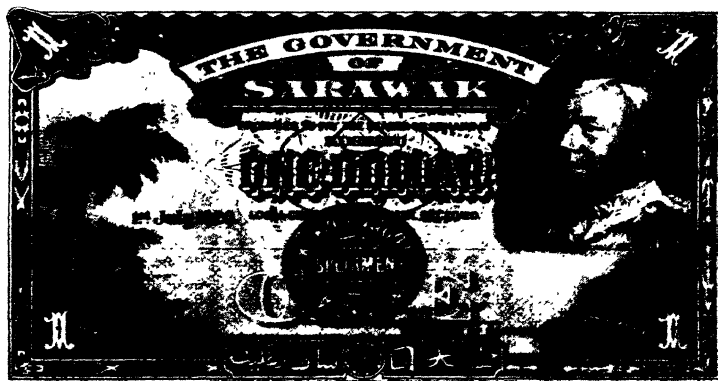
No portion of the soil from the cemetery was allowed to enter their houses. Everybody washed himself clean before he entered. If the soil was brought into the house, it would result in plagues. The bereaved persons confined themselves to their rooms for three days in order to undergo their Adat, or custom called Bepana. The rite of Bepana was mourning, including a mild kind of fasting. During this time the fire in the room was to be kept lighted, and at every meal-time, when scanty food was served, a part of the food was thrown under the house as a share for the dead man. After the third day of the Bepana had expired, the relatives performed the rite of entirely separating themselves from the deceased. It in-



Postage stamps of the three Rajas: left to right, 1st issue of the 1st Raja, early issue of 2nd Raja, later issue of 2nd Raja, current issue of 3rd Raja



Entire used prior to issue of postage stamps, bearing the Sarawak Post Office frank on the postmark. The handwriting is that of the 1st Raja



Specimen of bank notes now current in Sarawak



volved the putting out of the fire, the mourners were fed by a friend, and a medicine-man (Manang) waved a fowl over their heads and recited a poetic prayer to the effect that their souls might continue to live. Then the fowl that was waved became a sacrifice on behalf of the mourners.

Ngambi Sabayan Ngabang, or to invite the Spirits at Hades to the feast, expressed the meaning of the feast called Berantu.

The dead man, according to Dyak belief, after the Sabak Nerengka, was safely lodged in Hades, where he enjoyed happiness and ease and every luxury. The fertility of the soil of Hades, it seemed, was beyond compare, and all the dead man required was a few inches of land to farm upon. The rivers abounded in fish, and the woods were full of game that was good for food.

On the occasion of the Berantu a professional wailer was engaged to perform a lengthy recitation in the nature of an invocation to the powers of the unseen world, and to make a complete offering to them. This invocation was called Sabak Bebuah, which signifies a poetical recitation as well as being historical with regard to the unseen world. Hades, according to the Dyak point of view, was another world similar to this in every respect, excepting that labour was less, and more happiness was enjoyed.

The feast to the dead lasted a day and a night. In the morning the wailer began the recitation in the room of the bereaved persons. Whilst the women were listening attentively to this fascinating

### THE THREE WHITE RAJAS

poetry of the wailer, the composition of which was sometimes heart-rending, and sometimes soothing, the men were busily engaged in setting cocks to fight, and in gambling. Weeping, and laughing, and shouting continued to such an extent, and they created so great an uproar, it was terrible to listen to for any length of time.

As soon as the night fell, the wailer moved to the covered verandah of the house, where the poetical recitation continued until the morning. The sacrifices and the presents to the dead man were also taken out on to the verandah for exhibition, and were hung on the wall of the passage or common thoroughfare of the house. The people seated themselves and remained silent for the space of half an hour in order that proper respect should be paid to the ceremony of Muka Ulit or the unloosening of the mourning tie. Then a gong was struck, and a procession of warriors who had but lately been to war was formed to announce the freedom of the mourners. The mourning robes were cast upon one side, and the Dyaks dressed themselves in their very best apparel. Whilst this was going on there were deafening war-cries, and music blared from the many brass instruments they had collected. The sacrificial fowl was waved frantically in the air over the heads of the late mourners, and then killed, and the blood was smeared on their bodies. It was not until that moment that the sacred tie of mourning was actually pronounced broken forever.

Then the wailer told his tale. He professed first



of all in a vision, by means of the sacred poetical recitation, to travel along an exceedingly high mountain. After the mountain was ascended, there was a road that led down to the deep valley, and when that was crossed, it brought the wailer directly to the house of Sang Juara, a married man. The wailer, by means of some enchantment, lured Sang Juara into a fight, which as a matter of course the wailer won, and took Sang Juara's wife as a forfeit. Sang Juara's wife escorted the wailer to the house of Ribut, the Wind. Ribut was asked to take the message of invitation to the people at Hades, for it appeared that the wailer himself dared not go any further than the house of Ribut itself. The wife of Sang Juara was then returned to her husband, and the wailer returned home.

Ribut, it seemed, delivered the message to the people at Hades by hurling himself so violently amongst them that they were put into utter consternation. In consequence Sabayan Begau, the inhabitants of Hades, were put into a state of great alarm. They looked up and they could see the living making a feast, and the sacrifice that they were offering drew their attention and made them realize that the feast was intended for them, and so the people of Hades united with the living people, and they all mingled and feasted together. The next morning, after they had partaken of all the food that was there, more sacrifices were taken to the cemetery and placed upon the grave of the dead man. Some of these offerings were made of hardwood, and there were monuments handsomely

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carved and painted in the most wonderful and gorgeous colourings. They are supposed to represent the different articles a man or a woman may use in their daily life, and they are also intended to furnish the dead with implements in Hades so as to enable them to earn a living there. It seemed that nobody knew the proper road that led to the house of Ribut excepting Sang Juara and his wife. The road was not only beset by many dangers, but it twined in and out amidst jungles and mountain passes, and through valleys, and along the open spaces through a certain country adjacent to Hades.

Ribut himself, or the Spirit of the Wind, was the only person who knew how to deliver the messages to Hades, and he knew in what way to alarm the people there. The trees he would blow down, and the roofing of their houses he would displace, and he would whistle through the trees and mountain passes, and screech his way across the open spaces. The moment he had delivered his message to the dead that they were to proceed immediately to the living, the dead would adorn themselves in all their finest jewellery, and form into a long procession. All the dead would be gay because they were so eager to see those whom they had known a few days, or a few months, or perhaps a few years before. They also delighted at the advantage they had over them, because they could go to the feast of the living, whereas the living could not and never would be able to go to the feast of the dead.

A wonderful story has been related about this very feast. It was upon the occasion of a Berantu,

that a woman called Selaka was working at her farm when there passed her a procession of men and women and children who shouted her name as they went by. She answered them, and turning round she recognized several amongst them who had died many years before, and two of them who but only recently departed. "Come," said the dead, "come with us and we will let you attend our feast."

Selaka was afraid and yet she was fascinated, and eventually she agreed to accompany them to the feast. On the way she was transformed into a professional wailer, and from that moment she was able to recite the Wailer's Incantation, which she taught from then on to the generations that followed. She told the Dyaks that the dead were far better dressed than the living, and that they were very gay and happy. That is why the Dyaks to this day are not afraid of dying, and consider it an honour to be in Hades.

These are but part of the peoples that Vyner Brooke, Third Raja of Sarawak, rules over. The Malays are of a gentler, softer quality. There are Chinese seething and teeming in the towns, there are Indian traders, and dense black Tamils tending their oxen and their goats.

There are but few people who really know about Sarawak, and there are many who may say, and indeed who do say, adverse and unpleasant things about its government. Questions have been raised as to what kind of a man this third Raja is, and

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what sort of a part he has played in this kingdom so remote and unexplored. Many tales have been told about him, and some of his sayings have been handed down throughout the years. His reign has not been an easy one as the country grows and spreads and expands about his policy. To know exactly when to draw in against progression, when to place a barrier against too much research and exploitation—that is what these three Englishmen have dealt with, and dealt with so successfully. They have kept their country clean, and they have kept their own consciences clear. Sarawak still belongs to the Malays, to the Sea Dyaks and the Land Dyaks. It still belongs to the Kayans and Kenyahs, the Milanos, Muruts, Kadayans, Bisayahs, and other tribes. It is for them that the Rajas have laboured, not for THEMSELVES.

Vyner Brooke was born with that ineffable quality called charm, and his appearance of good nature has captivated all those who have come within close contact. Yet, beneath that careless and seemingly care-free exterior there lies a watchful and secretive mind which has always been the keynote to his character. A mind that will keep its own council until the proper time comes to strike, and then quite suddenly the blow will descend, so subtly and swiftly that it terrifies and baffles those about him.

His Government officers say this of him, "When the Raja laughs and calls you a wonderful chap, you are in danger. But if he slaps you on the back while he is saying it, you are as good as dead." He

## VYNER BROOKE

is an excellent conversationalist and has a fund of humour unbelievable. Here are two examples of the quaint twist of his mind that has so endeared him to those who know him well.

After the fire at Sibü, which almost entirely demolished the whole town, Vyner Brooke wrote to one of his officers: "It has not yet been ascertained whether the curious smell arising from the fire was due to burning rubber, or to the souls of the departing Chinese."

In another letter to England he wrote about his garden in Sarawak and said: "I am very busy fertilizing the marrow plants by taking the male plant to the female myself. Rather a come-down at my time of life, don't you think, being stud groom to a vegetable marrow."

Vyner Brooke, Third Raja of Sarawak, is a man who is at peace with everybody, but above all he is a man who is at peace with himself. He does not ask much out of life; on the other hand, he will go to any lengths to get exactly what he wants. He is never lonely, though he lives much alone. Throughout England, in the many houses we have had, he has left some lovely garden in memory of our time there. But above everything, this man will be remembered for the glorious sense of humour that is his. To those who have only once met this strange shy man who will stand awkwardly on one leg before them, twisting and tearing a handkerchief between his teeth, he will seem like a man so embarrassed that it would be better and far kinder to leave him alone. But, once this barrier is

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crossed and he becomes used to you, the abused handkerchief, or what is left of it, is put away, and for a moment only the blue eyes will look you straight in the face.

I asked him once what it was that was making him so shy, and this was the answer he gave me: "I have an awful feeling that somebody for some reason is going to be rude to me."

Twelve years after Vyner Brooke was installed as Raja of Sarawak he made a tremendous gesture, and offered His Majesty's Government the sum of £100,000 to provide education for the children of Colonial officials, and a substantial sum to the Board of Governors of the Imperial Forestry Institute.

Lord Passfield, who was Secretary of State for the Colonies at that time, made reference to this offer in an address at the Colonial Office Conference, and said that the Raja had chosen objects for his generosity which would be of outstanding benefit to the whole of the Colonial Empire.

He offered this sum willingly and without conditions; all he asked was that a representative of his should be present at the time when the question of the disposal of the money was considered.

His Majesty's Government were grateful, and they conveyed their gratitude in extremely charming terms. The Raja replied that Sarawak was very proud of her independence of administration assured to her by His Majesty's Government, and that Sarawak did not forget that her existence as an independent State depended entirely upon that self-same Government.

A great gift, offered genuinely and simply, and straight from the heart of one of the greatest men who has ever lived in Eastern history.

In the year 1850, James Brooke, First Raja of Sarawak, appears to have made a prophecy. It was when his efforts to extend British influence in the East were being called in question by the Little Englanders of those somewhat narrower times.

The Raja said, "The time will come in our country when no gentleman will serve the public, and your blackguards and your imbeciles will have a monopoly of appointments, though I believe there is not a cosy demagogue amongst the pack who would lead the life I lead for double the money I receive. It would not suit any of these ranting lovers of peace and popularity either in its exposure to danger, or climate, or monotony."

The language of James Brooke seems to have been sweeping, but maybe it has not been altogether unjustified. It is pleasant to know that in spite of all the opposition of those early days, the State of Sarawak has been governed successfully for nearly a hundred years on the very lines laid down by the first Raja, and Sarawak was able to present to the British Government £100,000 at a time when so many parts of the British Empire were dependent upon Downing Street to find their revenue.

It has been the Raja's practice at every meeting of his Council to run through the years and give a short survey of the economic condition of his

### THE THREE WHITE RAJAS

country, and I can think of no better way of conveying the march of time than in the words of his speech delivered at the twenty-fifth Triennial Meeting of the Council Negri, assembled at the Astana in Kuching on April 29th, 1937.

"Since 1934," he said, "trade has steadily improved and with it the return to prosperity has continued almost unchecked. In 1936 the revenue of the State exceeded by some 700,000 dollars that of 1934, and from present indication it appears that a further increase will be realized during the current year. But expenditure has also risen, and in 1936 exceeded the 1934 figures by 600,000 dollars. While I have been happy to sanction this increase, it has been necessary for my Treasurer to keep close watch on all details of expenditure in order gradually to bring the reserves of the State back at least to the level at which they stood before the last period of depression.

"This policy is a wise one, if occasionally irksome to those of us who are anxious to see much-needed improvements carried out without delay. Although for this reason it has been impossible for me to reduce indirect taxation to any marked degree, I have been able to effect a reduction in direct taxation such as exemption and Door Tax, and this reduction is designed to benefit just those people who stand in most need of relief, namely the native peasants to whom the failure of a harvest may mean disaster. It has also given me particular pleasure to have been able to fulfil the promise I made at the last Meeting to restore the



salaries of Government servants to their former level, and even in the case of junior service, to increase those salaries also.

“Sarawak has now reached a state of prosperity comparable to that of 1927. I wish, however, to impress on the Members of this Council the fact that this prosperity which we now enjoy is the result of an artificial stimulation of commodity prices, and that when these prices fall, our present period of plenty will be followed by one of economic stress and uncertainty. The present monetary and economic systems of the world render inevitable these violent fluctuations in the wealth and consequently the standard of living of the community, and we must face this unpleasant fact. Consequently it is essential for us all to conserve our resources in order to be able to face with confidence whatever the future may hold.

“The most important factor in our return to prosperity has been the marked increase in the price of rubber. When we last met in 1934 I foreshadowed the possibility of the producing countries combining to devise some means of restricting the output of rubber in order to raise the price to a profitable level; a month later the negotiations I had mentioned came to a head, and the rubber-growing countries entered into an agreement to regulate the production and export of rubber. This agreement, to which Sarawak is a signatory, has had the desired effect of raising the price of rubber to its present high level, and so, directly or indirectly, has benefited all sections of the com-

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munity, but it has also imposed upon Sarawak certain obligations. During 1936 it became apparent that existing methods of restriction were no longer sufficient to enable Sarawak to fulfil these obligations. It therefore became necessary to devise some alternative system, and in view of the peculiar conditions in Sarawak and the many difficulties to be overcome, both physical and psychological, this was not easy. I took the best advice obtainable, and as a result I have now decided to introduce a system of restriction by individual assessment, in the sure conviction that not only is this the fairest means of restriction, but that it is the only one which will produce the desired result. The introduction of this system, known for short as the 'Coupon System,' will cost a very large sum of money, which will be obtained by means of a cess on rubber exports: it is only fair that the rubber industry should meet the cost of operating a scheme from which they will draw such immense benefits.

"Although at first it may appear complicated and troublesome, I am sure that the coupon system will work satisfactorily when once it is understood by rubber growers. To be a complete success, though, it is essential for the officers whom I have appointed to administer it, and who are faced with a task of great responsibility and difficulty, to have the whole-hearted support and co-operation of everyone connected with the rubber industry. It will also be essential for the regulations governing rubber restrictions to be observed carefully, and I

therefore take this opportunity of declaring publicly that these regulations will be enforced strictly and without favour to individuals or races. I expect my people, and those who enjoy the privileges of peace and prosperity within the boundaries of my State, to co-operate loyally with my Government in this matter, in the full realization that it is only by scrupulously following these regulations that the desired object can be attained. It is the individual who benefits from the present high prices of rubber, and it is for him to conform to measures designed to assure the continuance of these high prices. I call upon the Members of this Council to make this known in their respective districts, and to use all their influence to ensure that this necessary degree of co-operation is forthcoming.

“The prices of sago and copra, both of them important agricultural products, have for some time past been considerably higher than they were when we last met, and producers have benefited accordingly. I regret, however, that the position with regard to pepper is not so satisfactory. When I last addressed you I was able to comment on the strides made by this industry, but in 1935 the price of this commodity was driven to an unnaturally high figure, and then it came down to the unprofitable level at which it still remains. I am sure, however, that as a result of the natural laws of supply and demand the time is not far distant when prices will again reach a level that will enable planters to receive a reasonable return for their labour.

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"To return to minerals. Messrs The Sarawak Oilfields, Ltd., propose shortly to start active operations at Sungei Mateding, near Mukah. If expectations are realized, this will prove a large and important oil-field, and the revenue will benefit accordingly.

"Gold continues to fetch a high price, and the output remains comparatively steady. As a result of this the various companies mining this metal in Upper Sarawak have made considerable profits, and it is only right that they should make adequate contribution to the revenue. By the extraction of gold they are drawing on a valuable asset of the State, and for this reason they must be prepared to pay taxes at a higher rate than other industries.

"Since 1934 there has been a steady improvement in the export trade in timber, and there is every likelihood that this improvement will continue. The area of reserved or protected forests has been doubled during the past three years: in the 'Protected Forests,' which have been established in accordance with a new policy, natives are now allowed to work minor produce, and it is hoped that in time it will be possible to arrange for timber to be worked in them under scientific control.

"So much for trade. During the past three years the programme of public works, although it has had to be curtailed to some extent owing to lack of staff, has yet included several major improvements to the towns of Kuching, Sibul, Sarikei, and Binatang.

"In Kuching a new vegetable market has been provided, the General Hospital and Government Printing Office have been extended, and at the 7th mile, Rock Road, a landing-ground for aeroplanes approaches completion. Pending has been much improved by the construction of a signal and customs station and jetty, and the roads approaching the capital have been enlarged and improved in order to carry a large and increasing volume of traffic now using them.

"New buildings at Sibü include a new Residency and a new General Hospital, and at Miri work has been commenced on the construction of new Government Offices and a new customs Godown.

"It has been decided to proceed with the construction of the road from the 10th mile, Rock Road, to Serian on the Sadong river, news which will be welcome to the people who depend on this road for transport and supplies. At the end of 1935 a census was taken of the area served by this road, and revealed the fact that the number of families that had settled in this area was much greater than had been anticipated. With the completion of the road there is little doubt that development will proceed at a rapid rate.

"Roads elsewhere have been maintained and extended wherever possible, and there are now over 400 miles of roads in the State.

"An entirely new Government Station has been opened at Nanga Meluan, in the heart of what was formerly the disaffected Dyak area in the Third Division. A fort has been built which houses a

### THE THREE WHITE RAJAS

dispensary and a wireless station in addition to quarters and the ordinary administrative offices; and as time goes on other public buildings will doubtless arise. The establishment of this station marks a new development of our methods of administering Dyaks, and I shall watch its progress with great interest.

“Among the major achievements of the past three years has been the steady advance in the work of Land Settlement. Settlement of rights in land has been completed in the coast districts of the Third Division, and land affairs there are for the first time on a sound basis, as is proved by the remarkable falling off in litigation in these districts. Settlement is at present in progress in the Kuching and Sarikei districts.

“Before passing on to other topics, there are two matters of which I wish to make a special mention, namely, Tuba Fishing and Coastal Transport.

“As regards the former, it has for some time past been evident that owing to the ruinous use of Tuba there was a real danger that many rivers would eventually be denuded of fish altogether. Accordingly (after consulting European and native officers and native chiefs from all parts of the country), I decided to prohibit the use of Tuba altogether in order to put an end to this wanton destruction, and in July, 1936, after several months' notice, an order to this effect came into operation. This order has been subjected to a certain amount of criticism by natives who consider that it interferes with a practice which they have come to consider as a right. I

ask them to be patient and to judge this order by results; although the order has only been in force for some ten months I am informed that results are already visible in the shape of noticeably increased catches, and I have no doubt in my own mind that at the end of the experimental period of two years the critics of this order will be converted when they find that it has ensured for them an abundant and dependable supply of fish, and that therefore they need never go hungry. In the meantime, I wish to make it quite clear that breaches of the order will not be tolerated. Several Kayan and Dyak chiefs have applied to me for permission to 'Tuba' the small side-streams, but since it is in these very side-streams that the fish breed, to accede to their request would obviously be to nullify the whole effect of the order. I desire you to make this clear to the natives in your respective districts, and to continue to explain to them the objects of the order and the benefits which it is expected to bring about.

"The question of Coastal Transport has recently come to the fore, since I regret to say that the condition of many vessels engaged in the coastal trade is so bad that the lives of passengers travelling in them are actually endangered. It is clear that in these circumstances they cannot be permitted to carry cargo or passengers. During the depression Government did not expect shipowners of the less seaworthy vessels to build new vessels, but with the revival in trade the owners were informed that they would only be granted a licence for a limited period. Trade has greatly improved, yet ship-

### THE THREE WHITE RAJAS

owners have taken no notice of Government's advice, and have made no attempt at all to replace unseaworthy vessels, and it now appears that the coastal trade will in the near future be seriously affected. I take this opportunity of asking all concerned in the shipping industry to take steps to remedy this very unsatisfactory position, and I wish to make it quite clear that Government has no intention of reconsidering its decision not to grant licences to unseaworthy vessels.

"In considering the future I wish to make special mention of three departments of government, namely those concerned with health, agriculture, and education. It is hardly necessary for me to stress the fact that the future well-being of all communities is very closely associated with the work of these departments, and I now propose to comment shortly on their future policy.

"It is my object gradually to expand health services throughout the State in order to ensure that no one shall be denied comparatively easy access to the benefits of modern medicine. A new hospital has been built at Sibu, and I hope in time, provided funds permit, to arrange for travelling dispensaries to tour outlying districts; I hope also either to establish dressing-stations or dispensaries in the interior, or else to arrange for more frequent visits to the 'Ulu' on the part of the Dressers.

"Great strides have been made in recent years in treating common complaints, and it is my aim to bring these achievements within the reach of the poorest of my subjects. The work performed by



my Health Department, however, will not bear its greatest fruit unless the more backward people are gradually educated to the value of simple hygiene, and until they are taught to practise the ordinary rules of health. For this reason my Government intends to devote increasing attention to the subject of hygiene schools.

“One of the most important industries of the State is rice-growing. Any country that is not self-supporting in this respect is necessarily at the mercy of the fluctuations in prices of the commodities it produces for sale to other countries, and suffers accordingly when the prices fall. This lesson was learned during the last depression, but it does not appear to have been taken to heart. It is therefore most necessary for Sarawak gradually to render herself independent of imported rice, and my Agricultural Department is devoting special attention to this problem. A successful experiment under European supervision in improved methods of rice cultivation has recently been made at Kanowit, and on my recent visit to this station I was pleased to hear of the interest taken in this experiment by people living near by. I hope that further experiments on these lines will be undertaken by my people themselves, since it is only by experience that the benefits of modern methods of cultivation can be fully realized.

“I regard education as possibly the most important problem with which we are faced today. I have already referred to the need for a greater knowledge of hygiene and of improved agricultural

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methods, but a necessary preliminary to the dissemination of this knowledge is an adequate standard of education. With rising standards of civilization, it is necessary for us to expand and improve our present methods of education. The scope of our schools must be extended to include instructions in agriculture and hygiene, and to ensure that the pupils will be fitted on leaving to take their place in the structure of their own community and lead happy, and at the same time useful, lives. Until now, there has been a tendency, naturally enough perhaps, to regard knowledge of the English language as sufficient qualification for employment; this is so no longer, and if the coming generation is to be assured of a livelihood, it must be prepared to a great extent to forgo all ideas of office employment, and to settle on the land. To the various Christian Missions throughout the State I wish to express my thanks for their services in the past, but I also ask them to co-operate with my Government in laying rather less emphasis on English, and more on the principles of hygiene, agriculture, and other useful arts. I have appointed an expert to review the present educational position in the State, and to make recommendations for the future, and it is probable that our educational machinery will be reorganized in the near future.

“And now, before I close, I wish to touch on a matter which closely concerns you all, and one which cannot be without its effect on my future policy. In the course of this speech I have alluded to the International Agreement into which Sarawak

has entered in order to regulate the production and export of rubber, and the construction of a landing-ground for aeroplanes near Kuching. This alone should be sufficient to show that the problems of my Government are no longer purely local, but have become interlocked with those of other nations. Owing to a natural process of events, Sarawak is losing much of her former isolation, and it is necessary for us to face this fact, and to adjust our ideas accordingly. In 1934 I told you all that it was not my policy, and had never been the policy of my predecessors, to increase the revenue of the State by inviting any large influx of foreign capital: this is as true today as it was then, but if we are to improve our standards of living we must accept the fact of increasing material progress and do our best to adapt ourselves to the changed conditions which this progress brings about. This cannot be done by keeping our eyes shut to the developments that are taking place all around us.

“On my accession I swore to maintain the rights of my subjects, and this pledge I intend to keep. As long as this country is ruled by myself and my descendants, our first care will be to honour this pledge, and jealously to protect the people of Sarawak and preserve their liberty. Adherence to this pledge, however, is not incompatible with making every effort to raise the standard of living of the people, and so increase their happiness and well-being. We must endeavour to fit ourselves for the task that lies ahead of us . . . the task of adapting ourselves to the new world that is opening up all

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around us, and with this object in view I ask you to devote particular attention to the educational problems I have already mentioned, for without education—and the right sort of education—your children will find themselves hopelessly handicapped in the struggle that lies before them. I also ask you to give me your sympathy and help in the work of administering my country, work which increases in complexity year by year. If at times you find new orders irksome, I ask you to remember that they are only enacted after very careful consideration and with a view to your ultimate benefit, and therefore to give them your full support. It is only the co-operation of my officers and advisers, combined with the loyalty of my subjects, that enables me to carry the burden which is placed on my shoulders; the knowledge that this loyalty has always been generously given in the past enables me to look forward with confidence to the future.

“In conclusion I again express the pleasure I feel in meeting you all at this Council, and I hope that the opportunities you will have for discussion amongst yourselves will lead you to a fuller understanding of the various problems of Government.”

At the conclusion of this speech there was a moment's silence. The Malay chiefs sat with their hands upon their knees, and their eyes veiled, ruminating on these propositions that were so far beyond their comprehension. The Chinese then began to whisper together of what was uppermost in their minds—rubber restriction, the coupon

system, and whether they would in reality benefit or not. The Raja had chronicled their past and then their future. He had paced their way through the years of gradual progression. He had revealed how Kuching had grown from straggling infancy to the meridian of perfection. The links of their lives had been bound together by his rule. New orders, new laws, new formations of government had been recorded. It was for them to see that the laws were fulfilled, and the orders carried out. He was the Great White Father of them all, and he had never failed them.

It is almost impossible to believe when you see the Sarawak of today that once upon a time there were really cannibals, and slave-markets, and tortures of human flesh. It is almost impossible to believe that we can travel amongst the natives, and walk freely abroad, unafraid of assault, or robbery, or danger from any of the tribes. It was not so very long ago that the punishment for adultery was of the cruellest and most savage kind, and that amongst the Kayans and Muruts the most primitive forms of torture were utilized. For instance, there was the case of a Kayan slave-girl, Tana Abit by name, who misbehaved with a boy of about her own age. The punishment that was meted out to her was this. She was placed in a large basket such as the natives use to carry their fowls to market. The basket was then tied to a rope at the end of a long bamboo, and suspended over the river. For hour upon hour they would lower the screaming girl into

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the river and out again, until they could see by the movement in the water that a crocodile was upon the scent; then with fiendish delight they watched the crocodile thrust his great snout into the openings of the basket and devour the girl bit by bit.

In Sarawak there were occasional cases of incest, and this was considered the greatest of sins because they said it brought a curse upon their rice crops. The moment any case of incest was heard of, people would storm the house of the offenders, take the man and the girl and strip them, and lay them close alongside one another, face to face. A bamboo stake was then driven through the bodies of both of them, binding them together, and there they were left to die. With the way of all fertile things in a fertile soil, the bamboo stake would flourish and grow into a bush, and this bush would be Taboo forever, a thing of warning to Kayans for all time.

Some Kayans once captured a Dyak and thought to themselves, "If we hand this man over to our women to torture they will be able to prolong his agony longer than we could." So they took him and they threw him on to the floor of the women's quarters and told them to do with him as they thought fit. Now women, especially native women, can often be fiendishly cruel, yet this was nothing compared to the savage barbarism that was lying dormant in these Kayan female hearts. First of all they bound him hand and foot to some stakes, then they proceeded to pull out all his hairs one by one. They were like a swarm of ants stinging into his flesh—hundreds of them pushing and

scrambling to partake of this fiendish pleasure. When this was completed, one or two of them took the small knives with which they cut up their fish, and gouged out his eyes. Finally, while the wretched creature was still writhing, they spent the rest of the afternoon snicking out bits of his flesh, until he died.

There was a Murut girl who had sinned in love, and her punishment was to be a slow death. The Muruts do not bury their dead in the earth, but put them in jars in the house, cement the body firmly in, and close the top of the jar. The Murut girl was placed alive in one of these jars, a hole was punctured in the bottom of the jar, and into the hole they inserted a long stem of bamboo that led into the house below. As the body died and decomposed, the flesh dripped through the hole in the jar, ran down the bamboo stake, and was devoured by the pigs beneath the house.

Today there is very little cruelty. Only now and again—amongst the Chinese mostly—is it to be found. There was a case, for instance, that came before the Kuching Courts not so very long ago which caused a great stir amongst all classes in the Bazaar. The Superintendent of Police visited a certain shop in the Main Bazaar, and on going upstairs found a young Hokkien girl, named Khoo Chai, lying naked on the ground. She had been so badly knocked about that she could hardly stand. The girl was at once removed to hospital, and it appeared from her statement that she had been consistently starved and beaten for some time past,

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though her terror of those responsible for this was so great that at first it was difficult to make her speak. Her wrists were so swollen, and the fingers of her hands so congested with blood owing to her having been tied up by the wrists with her feet off the ground, she could hardly hold anything, not even a cup to her lips. The girl looked about twelve years of age, actually she was fifteen or sixteen, but owing to ill-treatment and starvation her development had stopped. The female defendant denied the charge of cruelty and said that the bruises on the girl's body had been caused by the rough voyage from China to Sarawak, but it transpired during the trial that this journey had taken place over a year before.

On being taken to gaol the female prisoner was hooted by a large and hostile crowd that had escorted her as far as the gates. As soon as the unfortunate girl was able to leave the hospital, the Sarawak Government provided for her future.

The only people in Sarawak who look cruel are the Tamils. A great deal of the labour is done by Tamil coolies, the lean, black, oiled-skinned men one sees clinging precariously to the backs of lorries, or sweeping the scorched and dusty roads. A strange and enigmatic race are these Tamils, with their colourful rags, and the flowers they always carry behind their ears. They shout to one another as they walk the roads in a language that sounds as if they are eternally quarrelling, and all the time their great dark eyes gaze out of their savage features almost wistfully, as if wondering



how it was that they once belonged to a civilization that glittered in gorgeous palaces at a time when the Malays had not even emerged from the primeval jungle, a civilization that had reached its zenith almost when the Britons had only just forsaken the painting of their bodies with woad. The Tamils of Sarawak are, as a rule, illiterate, and belong to what some might term a kind of Pariah class; and yet when I look at them I cannot help thinking that maybe these were the kind of people who at one time had been in touch with Christ.

Visitors who have but lately been to Sarawak are deeply impressed by the lack of poverty and unemployment among the natives. They can find no flaws in the Raja's Government, no blunders in his policy. They find a contented people with few grievances and no opposition. Happy faces everywhere, brown smiling faces, brown kindly eyes. They find respect, and a primitive courtesy little to be expected from those pagan tribes, and they return to England amazed that in these days such a thing can be. Simplicity and bareness in the Astana, when all might be so glamorous and gay. Drab furniture, and unostentatious decoration of the rooms. But it is this very simplicity upon which the Brooke tradition has rested, it is upon this uncomely furniture, these unsightly ornaments, and this graceless architecture that the faith of these people has been sown. Three generations have held to them; three generations have deafened their ears to the cries of progress from outside. "Open up your country," has been the cry. "Open up your

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country and expand. Let the exploiters in. Be modern. Resign yourselves to the inevitable as time marches on."

But this present Raja looks round him at the other countries, and he has seen the world-wide abuse of this word "Progress." He has seen what civilization has done to these simple tribes, and how much the natives have gained from exploitation. Maybe it is that I am prejudiced, but one thing I am sure of. I prefer the uncut stones to the manufactured gems that are in shops.

Confused religions and covetous competition spoil and destroy the feelings of mankind. There is far too much unhappiness and far too little peace upon the earth. The Sarawak of yesterday was safe, the Sarawak of today is, I hope, secure. But what of the Sarawak of tomorrow? Who can foretell? Who can foretell the future of a restless world? Thanks to the efficiency of the Sarawak rule, and the vigilance of our Sarawak Government officers, this country on the North-Western side of Borneo is a far more law-abiding country than any other in the world. The blood lust is spoken of, but little felt, and these tribes, although unspoilt as yet by civilization, have learned that the taking of heads is cowardly and wrong. They have been told by their Raja that the ancient custom of cock-fighting is bad, and that it has only been indulged in to satisfy the craving of mankind.

It is a strange thing how within the heart of every country there lies a streak of cruelty and vice: bull-fighting in Spain, fox-hunting in England, grouse-

driving in Scotland, and cock-fighting all over the Far East.

I wonder how many of you have ever seen a cock-fight, a real cock-fight, I mean, with the artificial steel spurs tied tightly to the legs of every cock. If I close my eyes I can see a cleared space with little huts dotted here and there. I can see the space swarming with men and with women and with children. A regular holiday. Sellers of foodstuffs—hawkers—and water-carriers. And then the proud owners of the fighting cocks, carrying their birds beneath their arms. There is a great deal of Betui, or betting, and shrill voices are raised amongst the various groups. Then the fight, the strange vicious tenacity of these domestic birds. Their feathers are covered with blood, the little steel sword-blades are dripping blood upon the ground. All round and about there are the attentive faces of the natives, only caring for one thing, MONEY. The Raja has endeavoured to teach these people the cruelty and harm of such a practice, and in order to appease him, and to draw a veil over what is so wrong in order to make it appear right, they indulge still in their cock-fights, but have reluctantly removed the spears from the legs of their fighting cocks.

Sarawak is, I should say, one of the few countries left where you can walk abroad in safety. No beggars, no trippers, no troubles on the track. The Dyaks have brought the courtesy of entertaining to the very finest art. If I wanted to spend a really happy evening in that far-away country, do you know what I would do? I would get into a boat,

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and I would paddle to the far reaches of the river to remote places where the people live who were once upon a time, in the reign of the first Raja, a terror to the land. And there, squatting on the ground, with a plateful of rotten eggs before me, I would listen to the native songs, and watch them dance their native dances, whilst over my head, in acknowledgment of my presence there, three smooth and shining skulls would hang, with a grin of welcome upon their gaping mouths.

I have tried to convey in these pages a little of the width of difference there is between what we in England call Life and what meaning it holds to the primitive races of the East. In the writing of this book I do not seem to have been able to compete with the inexorable uniformity of history. How can one harness a dream, and bring it to earth and label it? How can one turn a fantasy into a fact, and schedule the scenery, and take hold of shadows and outline them in pen and ink? To me, Sarawak will always be a dream place, and the legends and beliefs are like lace-work against the jungle, softening the blackness of it, and spreading over the cruelty of it like a magic cloak. The shadows are the slim brown bodies of these savage tribes. . . . Music vibrates throughout the air. The beating of the drums is like the beating of a thousand hearts, and the gongs tear through the night. Disturbing and clamorous and clear.

There is no twilight and no dawn in Sarawak. The day rises quite suddenly from between soft grey mists, and unwinds its grey covering to reveal

the day. The sun at six o'clock stands for a moment upon the pinnacle of the horizon with flaming arms stretched across the blueness of the sky. Then the great ball of fire descends into the eager bosom of a velvet night.

The air grows still for about an hour before the darkness. Strong pungent smells rise from the little Kampongs on either side of the river. Blossoms scatter their scent delicately across the fertile soil. Wood may be burning, jungle fires throw clouds of bitter smoke into the air. Drums beat like slow and sleepy hearts. A gong—a Chinese hawker—children's laughter on the river banks—a lazy, thoughtless life melting into days and nights—a life that holds you by the hand and keeps you there.

Each year the Raja and I leave the shores of England for Sarawak. Not many good-byes to be said. A hand-clasp here, and a smile there. Not many hearts beating for us—not many loving, anxious hearts travelling with us as we go. We belong to Sarawak, not to England. Heavy seas ahead of us—seas churning into pure white foam as we go. The great ship rocking and twisting with the mast ropes straining to the wind. Glorious wet decks, and the smell of old ropes coiled up in the bows. Freedom! Adventure! Infinite loneliness! And depths of infinite joy!

We may think that we have to suffer. We may sometimes even feel aggrieved and ill-used, and unhappy; but at least we are not ruled by omens and by dreams, and we are as far as possible masters of our own souls.

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Sarawak levels a man's mind. It makes people find themselves, maybe for the first time. How easy it is, and how infinitely simple, merely to **EXIST** . . . instead of **LIVING**. How easy and simple it is to rise up in the morning with a great city before you, and know that you can go here and you can go there, and never actually be alone.

In Sarawak there is nowhere to go, unless you yourself find a place. There is nothing to do, unless you yourself create a thing. Surely in the hearts of each one of us there lies an unformed dream, a desire that may not be fulfilled. Environment may wrap a cloak about those dreams, and those desires, and England may take the heart out of your very body, and the courage out of your very soul. Go then to Sarawak. You will regain that heart of yours, and you will relearn how to dream, and how to renew your desire; for I tell you, there is no lovelier thing in all the world than this country of the Three White Rajas, out in the Far East.

Here are some of the simple things that I have learned in Sarawak. I have listened to my Malay boy telling them to me, with his brown face smiling kindly into mine.

Did I know that the light of a firefly was declared to be 11,400 candle-power, and that it was also estimated that a firefly light was two hundred times as cheap as that of an incandescent electric lamp, reckoning its cost on the basis of energy expended in the production of it? And did I know that the

cells were in the rear end of the abdomen, and they appeared to secrete a chemical substance which, when oxygen came in contact with it, would give out the light?

Did I know that the average age to which an ant would live was ten years, although in some cases this seemed to be extended to almost fifteen years?

Did I know that each stem of the wild poppy had from ten thousand to sixty thousand seeds?

And last of all, did I know that the ears of a grasshopper were situated on their front legs, but that the green grasshopper had its ears underneath its knees?

How many of you, I wonder, know these things, and even if you have known them, how many of you were told them so simply and so charmingly as I was? The Malay will make the smallest thing seem big and the slightest incident they will turn to an adventure.

We have a little newspaper that is issued in Kuching called the *Sarawak Gazette*, which first saw the light of day in 1870. The actual interval of time between that date and today is in truth nothing, but it is the changes that have occurred during this interval that makes the year 1870 seem so incredibly far away. We can sit down and contemplate the seventies of the last century across what may seem a vast and fragile bridge, a bridge over which the minds of the present generation would find it difficult to cross. Through the mists of time we might catch a glimpse of the simple

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order of things at that time, an order that seemed to possess a spaciousness, and a sense of purpose and permanence, that we who live in this chaotic world can hardly heed: a purpose and an order that seemed deeply rooted in all peoples, until the thunder of a great war scattered men's brains and drove the countries into ruin.

In 1870 Sarawak was passing through the difficult period of her history, but today she is resting upon easier shoulders, and the strain of living has been lessened. Our little newspaper has recorded many happenings, it has been the eyes, and ears, and voice of Sarawak to the outside world. When it reached its thousandth number there was an entire supplement of congratulatory messages, and the three that we sent, the Raja, the Tuan Muda, and myself, I will now repeat.

From the Raja :

May I offer the heartiest congratulations on the thousandth issue of the *Sarawak Gazette* and my sincere wish that this first thousand may be the foundation-stone of many more to come. The *Sarawak Gazette* is, and I can say quite honestly will always be, the most accurate and interesting record of Sarawak history as Time marches on.

From the Tuan Muda :

The fact that the *Sarawak Gazette* and I both made our first appearance in Sarawak in the seventies invests the news that you propose to



make a special feature of the thousandth number with particular interest for me.

On the occasion of my arrival the principal (and only) Medical Officer presented my mother with a bottle of chloroform and a face-towel, and invited her to help herself when so inclined, as he expected to be busy. I have no doubt that the birth of the *Gazette* took place in circumstances which would now be regarded as equally unconventional, and a glance at the news reported in those days shows what changes have taken place meanwhile. I hope your special number will bring home to potential correspondents their duty to future generations in assisting to record incidents which, although perhaps of fairly common knowledge in out-stations today, will be read with absorbed interest by their successors a thousand numbers hence.

It is a tribute to the energy with which you prosecute your Editorial activities in this (for many reasons) not too enviable post that some of your correspondents' articles have achieved fame beyond the confines of the State, and I feel that your special issue should form a fitting memorial of the occasion.

From myself:

So the *Sarawak Gazette* has reached its thousandth number ; for the thousandth time it has chronicled the lives of men and women who work upon Sarawak soil. It is a commendable, indeed it is more than that, it is a magnificent and beneficial effort.

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The *Sarawak Gazette* has paced its way through the years of gradual progression; we read in its columns how Kuching has grown from straggling infancy to the meridian of perfection; we read, what is more, about ourselves in print, and each out-station officer can tell the doings of his district. Indeed it is the link that binds these lonely men to life. New orders, new laws, new formations of government appear in the pages year by year. There are police cases, phenomenal happenings, and social pages for the frivolous-minded. Officers come and go, but their names remain forever recorded in the *Sarawak Gazette*. It is the little Literary Flag Sarawak bravely flies over the journalistic world. When I first came out to Sarawak, the *Gazette* was a very serious affair. Then it passed from Editor to Editor, and it swung like a pendulum from grave to gay. Now it is a thousand numbers strong. A great achievement, Mr Editor, and one of which you have every reason to be proud.

Long life and a thousand more issues to the *Sarawak Gazette*. I salute the little Literary Flag.

The Raja has, in Sarawak, a cinema of his own which is called The Sylvia Cinema, and on Saturday, November 24th, 1934, the first programme was shown. The theatre was packed to full capacity by an audience representing members of almost every community, who had been invited there as the Raja's guests. Few if any of these people were

prepared for the treat that was in store for them. Long before the performance started they were in their seats listening to a wonderful programme of orchestral music, and somewhat dazzled by the magnificent lighting effects, which were slowly merging from colour to colour as they watched them. Then, to a murmur of suppressed excitement, the curtains slowly parted, showing two well-produced portraits of the Raja and myself, which were greeted with the most flattering and prolonged applause. After the News Reel and the Ideal Sound Magazine Reels there came the interval, during which we could all retire below to the bar, of which we were so much in need. Drinks were served, cooled and iced and alcoholic, and sweet lemonade, and ginger-ale for the Malays.

The film displayed on that first night was *King Kong*, because the Raja reckoned that, to begin with, the natives would be more likely to enjoy a fantastic drama of that kind. But what he did not reckon upon was the quickness of the native brain, and the fact that they see a joke long before the average Englishman has even heard it.

The Sylvia Cinema is a wonder building. The architecture is modern, and the simplicity of its clear-cut lines, inside and out, give it an atmosphere of solidity and grace. Every seat is comfortable, from the front rows to the balcony, with an unobstructed view of the entire screen. There is a high roof, and electric fans over almost every row. There is perfect sound production, and all of this at a very moderate price. This cinema has been the most

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welcome inspiration my husband has ever had, and we often wonder how in the world we ever spent our evenings in the good old days. The amazing part about it is that, however poor the audience may be, or however humble a native enters the cinema, he or she will come there in the best clothes that they have because the owner of it is their Raja.

We have no other kind of theatre in Kuching, except occasionally some Malay players may pass by, or else a Chinese theatre will rear itself by the side of the river for a week, and I think one of the hardest workers I have ever seen in my life was a little Chinese boy playing the leading part in an open-air theatre in the Kuching Bazaar. He was an artist to his finger-tips. He held the centre of the stage and arrested everyone's attention, just like a small bird of Paradise, caught up in a gilded cage. He spoke his lines fluently and rapidly. They told me he was only ten years old. A star player in that little span of years, and what a player! One mistake, one hesitation, a slight weariness—and he would have lost his post.

Trained from babyhood to be play-actors, these children are taught the secrets of sound and action as soon as they can walk. I could not help comparing him with some of our star actors in England, who think themselves ill-used because twice a week they are obliged to play twice a day. This child played all day and every day until midnight, with only a few hours' rest between. And not only that. He played in the open sunshine, with the sweating,

steaming crowd below him in the street, and he played in a head-dress of such weight that even I could hardly lift it in my hands. His clothes were piled-on thicknesses of gold, and there was not one portion of his little body that was not weighed down by the richness and glory of apparel. The story of a Chinese play is hard to follow. The characters seem always to be angry and excited. There is no repose in their drama, and seemingly but very little romance. The stage is never empty for a moment. Fighting, Love, Cowardice, and Courage are all there, portrayed by these child-actors. The little boys who represent the girls flit to and fro with their friends and make great use of their sleepy, slanting eyes. If a scene has to be altered, the stage-hand moves from the wings with a Hun choi pipe in his mouth. Quietly he hitches up some fresh curtain on a pole, and you have to readjust your mind as rapidly as he raises his hand, from some palace to a river's bank. The orchestra, consisting of a Chinese flute, adds to the general effect of vivacity and sound. The little boys shriek their amorous songs. The comedian performs his Chinese antics in the corner. And through it all, unperturbed and glorious in his finery, the little star actor plays his heroic part, until at last, at midnight, the tragedy of comedy is at an end.

Can he sleep? Will he sleep?—this child who should have been in bed three hours ago: or has the teaching of perpetual motion been too much for him at last? One wonders how long they will live, these little boys, or if they will die like tropical

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birds that have been trapped for the indulgence of mankind.

Such is the Sarawak of today, this almost perfect model State. The army has merged into the Constabulary Force of Police, the Government is run by an Advisory Committee, and we have our Bishop and our Judge; but over all this, there is this white-haired, blue-eyed man who loves his people, and whom the people love.

There has been a great deal of publicity drawn lately to Sarawak, and the country has been cheapened and ridiculed in the eyes of a sensation-loving world. But those who are endeavouring to drag down and belittle the Raja will find that they succeed in lowering and reducing no one but themselves. The Raja always has been and always will remain a remote and dignified figure, his record unstained and his life untouched by the rumour of clamorous tongues. For he has walked remotely and undisturbed upon the highest and cleanest path of life, and I who alone have been fortunate enough to walk beside him have had the privilege of his confidence and trust.

What is not known can never be said, and there is no one who has really known the Raja. The History of these Three White Rulers of an Eastern State will remain forever as a monument to their memories: three lives that have been devoted to one common cause — "Sarawak belongs to the Malays, Sea Dyaks and Land Dyaks, Kayans, Kenyahs, Milanos, Muruts, Kadayans, Bisayahs,

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and other tribes, and not to us. It is for them we labour, not for ourselves." That is the epitaph that should be written across the pages of their lifetime. A loyalty to their people, and a devotion to their country that has remained unspoilt throughout the years.





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